TERROR

TALES FROM THE CRYPT®

NO. 38
OCT.-NOV.

10¢

FEATURING...

THE CRYPT-KEEPER

THE OLD WITCH

THE VAULT-KEEPER

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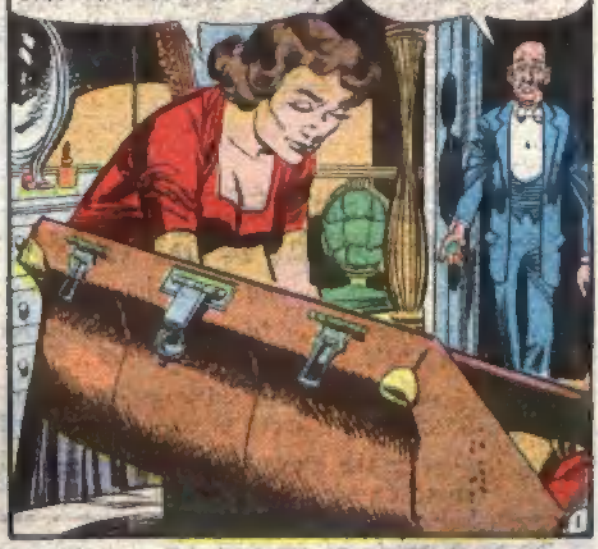
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH. WELL, ALL *I* CAN SAY IS... YOU'RE EITHER *FANS* OR *FIENDS* FOR PLUNKIN' DOWN *GOOD U.S. CURRENCY* FOR *THIS REEKING RAG*. IN ANY CASE... *GREETINGS GHOULS!* WELCOME ONCE MORE TO *THE CRYPT OF TERROR*... TO THE *PUTRID PAGES* OF *THIS... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG*. I'M READY TO START OFF THE *EVIL FESTIVITIES* WITH AN *ODD TALE* TOLD TO ME BY AN *ODD TELLER* OF *ANY* TALE... A *TRUNK*. *LISTEN*, NOW, TO THE *STEAMER'S* OWN *SCREAM-STORY*... WHICH IT CALLS...

TIGHT GRIP!

THE LAYERS OF DUST THAT HAD SETTLED UPON ME OVER THE YEARS HAVE BEEN SCRUBBED AWAY, AND NOW I LIE UPON WILMA'S BEDROOM FLOOR, MY LID FLUNG WIDE, YAWNING HAPPILY AND SWALLOWING THE NEATLY FOLDED CLOTHES SHE IS BUSILY PACKING INTO MY INSIDES. I FEEL CLEAN AND FRESH AND NEW AND ALIVE AGAIN AFTER LYING DEAD FOR SO LONG IN THE SILENT LITTERED ATTIC. AND THERE IS A JOY WITHIN ME THAT MIRRORS WILMA'S JOY. FOR TODAY, WILMA IS TO BE MARRIED...



WILMA IS LIKE A *CHILD* AGAIN AS SHE FLITS ABOUT HER BEDROOM SINGING HAPPILY... THE CHILD I *KNEW* WHO USED TO STEAL UP TO THE ATTIC WHEN WE WERE *BOTH* SO *YOUNG* AND PEER *INSIDE* ME AND FINGER THE OLD LACE AND CLOTH THAT HAD BEEN STORED IN ME AND FORGOTTEN...

CARL? OH...HE'S *EARLY!* I'M NOT EVEN *READY!* SHOW HIM IN, JEEVES...

YES, MA'AM.

YES, I AM AN *OLD* TRUNK. I WAS WITH WILMA'S *PARENTS* ON *THEIR HONEYMOON*. I WAS *NEW*, THEN. AND I CARRIED THEIR BELONGINGS WHEN THEY MOVED *HERE*... TO *THIS HOUSE*. AND THEN I WAS PUT *AWAY*, UP *THERE*, WHERE ALL I COULD DO WAS *WAIT* AND *LISTEN* AND *GROW OLD*...

CARL, DARLING...

WILMA, MY PET...

I HEARD MANY THINGS WHILE I LAY THERE GATHERING DUST IN MY ATTIC GRAVE. I HEARD THE LUSTY CRY OF THE NEW-BORN INFANT NAMED WILMA. I HEARD HER CHILDISH VOICE AS SHE SCAMPERED ABOUT DOWNSTAIRS. AND I SAW HER WHEN SHE CAME TO ME AND PLAYED WITH ME AND LAUGHED GAYLY...

ALMOST *PACKED*, WILMA, DEAR?

ALMOST, CARL...

AND I LOVED HER. EVEN *AFTER* SHE'D *GROWN*, AND NO LONGER *CAME* TO ME AND SEARCHED MY CONTENTS AND TRIED ON MY SHAWLS AND DRESSES AND SCARFS, I LOVED HER. EVEN WHEN ALL I COULD DO WAS *LIE* THERE AND *LISTEN* TO HER...BELOW... LISTEN TO HER FOOTSTEPS GROW *HEAVY* WITH THE *YEARS*, AND HER *MOTHER'S* AND *FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS DIS-APPEAR* WITH THEIR *DEATHS*...

I'VE CALLED *THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE* AND HE'S *WAITING* FOR US. THE *RESERVATIONS* AT THE HOTEL ARE *SET*...

OH, CARL. I'M SO *NERVOUS!* I CAN *SCARCELY PACK*...

AND *I* FELT HER *YOUTH PASS* AS *SHE* FELT IT PASS. AND *I PRAYED* AS *SHE* PRAYED... THAT SHE WAS *NOT* DESTINED TO A... LIFE OF *LONELINESS*... THAT SHE WOULD *MEET* SOMEONE AND HE WOULD *ASK* HER TO BE HIS *WIFE*. AND *NOW* OUR PRAYERS, WILMA'S AND MINE, HAD COME *TRUE*...

HERE...*LET ME!* *YOU* GO GET *READY*. *I'LL* FINISH UP...

YES. OH, DEAR... I *HOPE* I HAVEN'T *FORGOTTEN* ANYTHING...

JUST *ONE THING*, THOUGH... ONE THING THAT *BOTHERS* ME... ONE THING THAT *SPOILS* THE JOY I FEEL. THIS *MAN*... THIS *CARL ROSWELL*... THIS MAN WHO EVEN NOW ANXIOUSLY STUFFS THE LAST FEW ARTICLES OF WILMA'S NEWLY-PURCHASED TROUSSEAU INTO ME... I AM *AFRAID* OF THIS MAN...

THERE! READY TO *GO*, WILMA?

READY, CARL!

I FEEL HIS ROUGH HANDS UPON MY LID, SLAMMING IT DOWN. AND I WINCE... *NOT* WITH *PAIN*, *NOT* FROM THE *NOISE*... I WINCE WITH *FEAR*. THERE IS SOME-THING *ABOUT* THIS MAN. SOMETHING... *TERRIFYING*...

LET'S GO, THEN...

YOU *RANG*, MADAM?

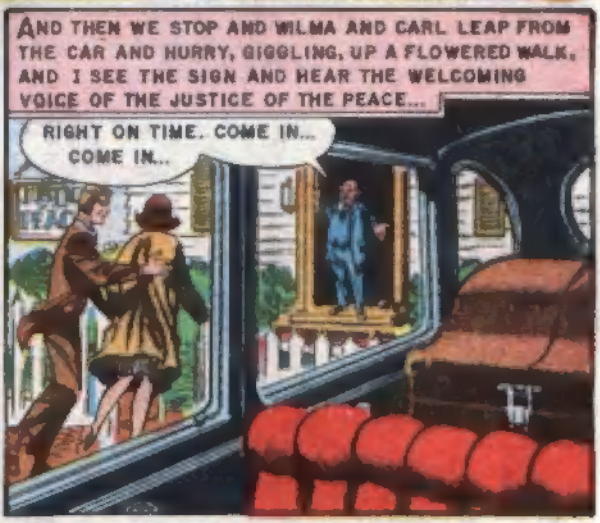
CARRY MY *TRUNK* OUT TO THE *CAR*, JEEVES!

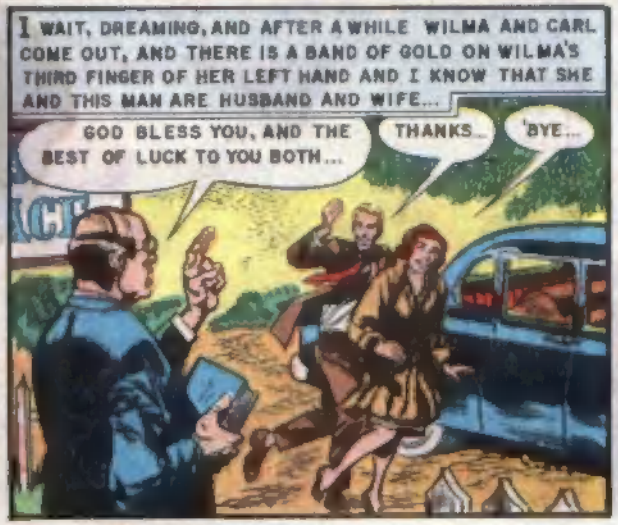
NOW JEEVES IS COMING TOWARD ME AND I FEEL MYSELF BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED...
HEAVY, JEEVES?
NOT VERY, MA'AM...

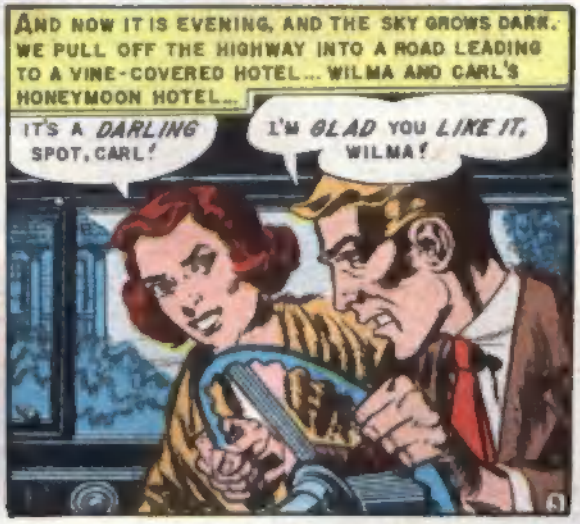
AND SUDDENLY I FEEL THE WARM SUN UPON ME FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIRTY-NINE YEARS...
JUST TOSS IT ON THE BACK SEAT THERE, JEEVES.
YES, MR. ROSWELL...

AND AS CAR DOORS SLAM AND THE MOTOR ROARS, I SIGH HAPPILY... MY FEARS FORGOTTEN...
GOOD-BYE, JEEVES.
GOOD-BYE, MISS WILMA. GOOD LUCK! HAVE A HAPPY HONEYMOON...

I SIT CONTENTEDLY, FEELING OF THE SILK AND LACE AND FLIMSY THINGS INSIDE ME AND THE WIND UPON ME AS WE SPEED SOUTH... WILMA, AND I, AND THIS MAN...
HAPPY, DARLING?
VERY...


AND THEN WE STOP AND WILMA AND CARL LEAP FROM THE CAR AND HURRY, GIGGLING, UP A FLOWERED WALK, AND I SEE THE SIGN AND HEAR THE WELCOMING VOICE OF THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE...
RIGHT ON TIME. COME IN... COME IN...


I WAIT, DREAMING, AND AFTER A WHILE WILMA AND CARL COME OUT, AND THERE IS A BAND OF GOLD ON WILMA'S THIRD FINGER OF HER LEFT HAND AND I KNOW THAT SHE AND THIS MAN ARE HUSBAND AND WIFE...
GOD BLESS YOU, AND THE BEST OF LUCK TO YOU BOTH...
THANKS...
'BYE...


AND NOW IT IS EVENING, AND THE SKY GROWS DARK. WE PULL OFF THE HIGHWAY INTO A ROAD LEADING TO A VINE-COVERED HOTEL... WILMA AND CARL'S HONEYMOON HOTEL...
IT'S A DARLING SPOT, CARL!
I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT, WILMA!

STRANGE HANDS PULL ME FROM THE CAR, CARRY ME ACROSS THE HOTEL LOBBY, AND DROP ME TO THE FLOOR BEFORE THE ELEVATOR, AND I LISTEN TO THE SCRATCHING OF THE PEN AS CARL REGISTERS...
MR...AND...MRS... CARL... ROSWELL. LOOKS GOOD, EH, HONEY?
IT LOOKS WONDERFUL, DARLING...

NOW WE ARE ALONE...WILMA AND I AND CARL... ALONE IN THIS HOTEL SUITE. AND SUDDENLY THAT FEAR IS BACK AGAIN...THAT FEAR OF THIS MAN WHO HAS TAKEN MY WILMA AS HIS BRIDE...
TIRED, DEAR?
VERY...

WILMA'S NERVOUS FINGERS LIFT MY LID AND SHE RUMAGES THROUGH ME, LIFTING OUT HER PRETTIEST GOWN. FOR THIS IS THE NIGHT WE'VE BOTH DREAMED OF...WILMA'S WEDDING NIGHT...
WILMA?
YES, CARL? WHAT... GASP...

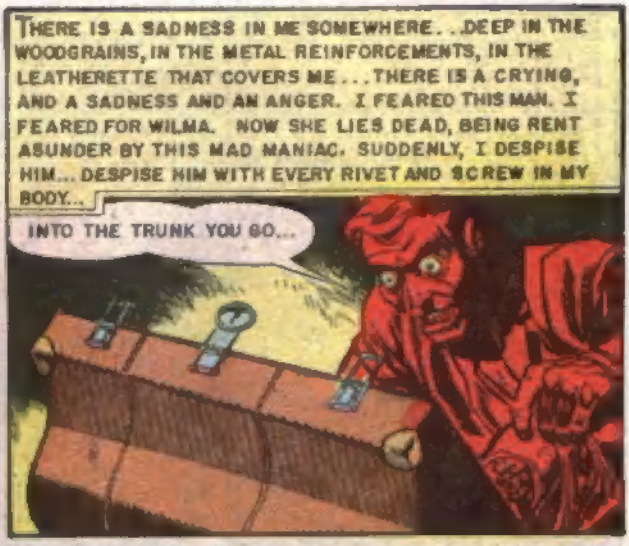
CARL STANDS BEFORE WILMA, THE GLEAMING AXE THAT HE'S JUST TAKEN FROM HIS BAG IN HIS HAND...
CARL! THAT AXE...
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, WILMA...

CARL! YOU'RE JOKING!
YOU'RE A FOOL, WILMA! DID YOU REALLY THINK I COULD LOVE YOU? DID YOU? YOU'RE ALMOST FORTY. I'M TWENTY-SEVEN. IT WASN'T YOU, WILMA! IT WAS YOUR MONEY...

I PLANNED ALL THIS, WILMA. PLANNED IT CAREFULLY. YOU'RE GOING TO GET SICK...BE CONFINED TO YOUR ROOM. AND ALL THE WHILE, I'LL BE GETTING RID OF YOUR BODY... PIECE BY PIECE. AND WHEN IT'S ALL BEEN DISPOSED OF, I'M GOING TO SAY YOU RAN AWAY...THAT WHEN I WOKE UP, YOU WERE GONE. AND THE POLICE WILL LOOK FOR YOU... AND THEY WON'T FIND YOU...AND YOUR MONEY WILL BE MINE...

THE AXE BLADE CUTS WILMA'S SCREAM FOR HELP SHORT AS CARL BRINGS IT DOWN UPON HER BLANCHED FACE...
NO, CARL! NO! YAA... GGHH...
YES, WILMA...

I AM EMPTY NOW. CARL HAS STRIPPED ME OF MY CONTENTS... THE NEWLY-PURCHASED LINGERIE... THE SHOES... THE DRESSES. I LIE BESIDE THE BATHROOM DOOR, MY LID WIDE, WAITING... LISTENING IN HORROR AS CARL DISMEMBERS WILMA'S BODY WHERE HE'S CARRIED IT... IN THE TUB...
EH, EH, EH...

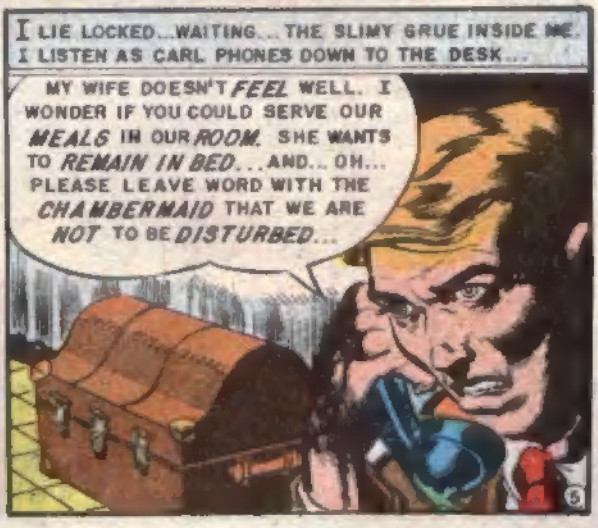

THERE IS A SADNESS IN ME SOMEWHERE... DEEP IN THE WOODGRAINS, IN THE METAL REINFORCEMENTS, IN THE LEATHERETTE THAT COVERS ME... THERE IS A CRYING, AND A SADNESS AND AN ANGER. I FEARED THIS MAN. I FEARED FOR WILMA. NOW SHE LIES DEAD, BEING RENT ASUNDER BY THIS MAD MANIAC. SUDDENLY, I DESPISE HIM... DESPISE HIM WITH EVERY RIVET AND SCREW IN MY BODY...
INTO THE TRUNK YOU GO...

I RECOIL AS THE DISMEMBERED SECTION OF WILMA'S ONCE PROUD BODY DROPS INSIDE ME AND I FEEL ITS SOFTNESS AND THE FLUID THAT FLOWS FROM IT. I SLAM MY LID DOWN IN FRIGHT AND LOATHING AND...
YEOWWWWW...
BAM

AND SUDDENLY, AMID MY SADNESS, THERE IS GLEE. I HAVE HURT THIS MADMAN WHO HAS TAKEN MY LOVED ONE FROM ME. I CAN HURT HIM AGAIN...
BLASTED @#X!! TRUNK! STAY OPEN, BLAST YOU...

ANOTHER PART OF WILMA IS TOSSED WITHIN ME AND AGAIN I SLAM MY LID SHUT UPON HIS CURSED BLOODY PAW...
Y-I-I-I-I-I...
WHAM

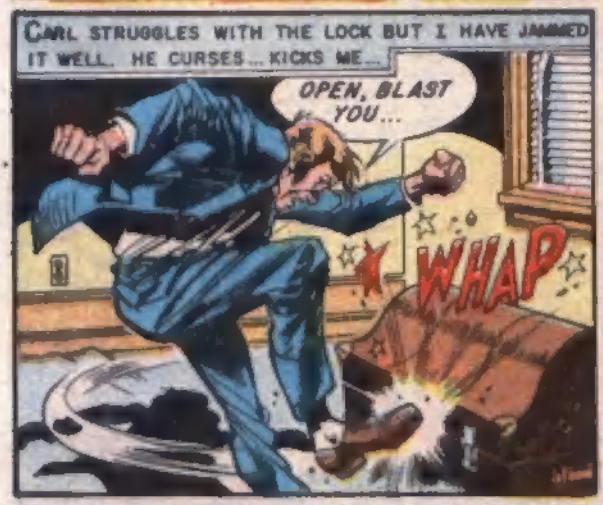
NOW CARL HAS JAMMED A STICK INTO MY MOUTH... FORCING MY LID TO STAY OPEN... PREVENTING ME FROM HURTING HIM. BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS. I WILL WAIT. HE FILLS ME WITH WILMA'S SEVERED REMAINS AND I EMBRACE THEM LOVINGLY...
THERE! DONE! NOW TO SHUT AND LOCK IT... AND CLEAN UP THE PLACE...


I LIE LOCKED... WAITING... THE SLIMY GRUE INSIDE ME. I LISTEN AS CARL PHONES DOWN TO THE DESK...
MY WIFE DOESN'T FEEL WELL. I WONDER IF YOU COULD SERVE OUR MEALS IN OUR ROOM. SHE WANTS TO REMAIN IN BED... AND... OH... PLEASE LEAVE WORD WITH THE CHAMBERMAID THAT WE ARE NOT TO BE DISTURBED...

CARL IS CLEVER... VERY CLEVER. HE HAS TAKEN PILLOWS AND LAID THEM NEATLY UPON THE BED AND COVERED THEM WITH BLANKETS SO THAT IT APPEARS AS IF WILMA LIES THERE...
YOUR DINNER, MR. ROSWELL...
OH, THANK YOU. SHHH, MRS. ROSWELL IS ASLEEP IN THERE...

AND EVERY SO OFTEN, HE COMES TO ME AND UNLOCKS ME AND REMOVES A DISMEMBERED SECTION OF WILMA'S BODY AND WRAPS IT CAREFULLY IN THE PAPER HE'S BROUGHT FOR THE PURPOSE AND GOES OUT FOR A 'WALK'...
LOVELY DAY, MR. ROSWELL. HOW'S MRS. ROSWELL?
MUCH BETTER. REMEMBER, SHE'S NOT TO BE DISTURBED!

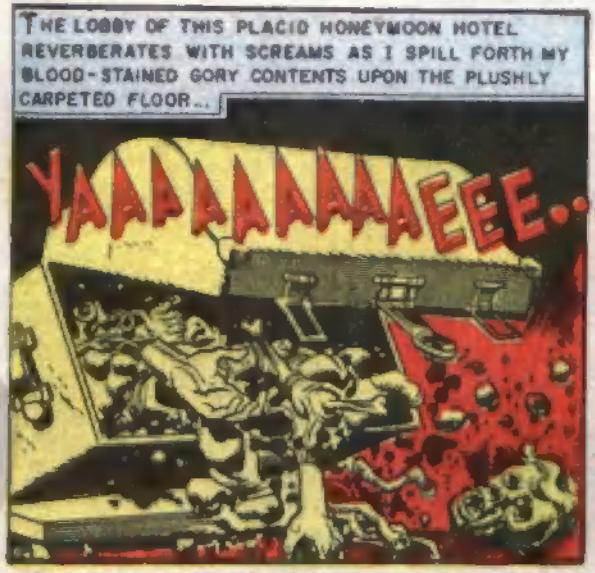
AND NO ONE SUSPECTS THE TRUTH. ONLY I KNOW THE GRISLY TRUTH. THE DAYS PASS. THE PARTS INSIDE ME ARE SLOWLY DISAPPEARING. AND I GROW DESPERATE. I MUST THWART THIS FIEND. EXPOSE HIM...
EH, EH. TIME FOR ANOTHER WALK. I'LL... I'LL... WHAT THE...

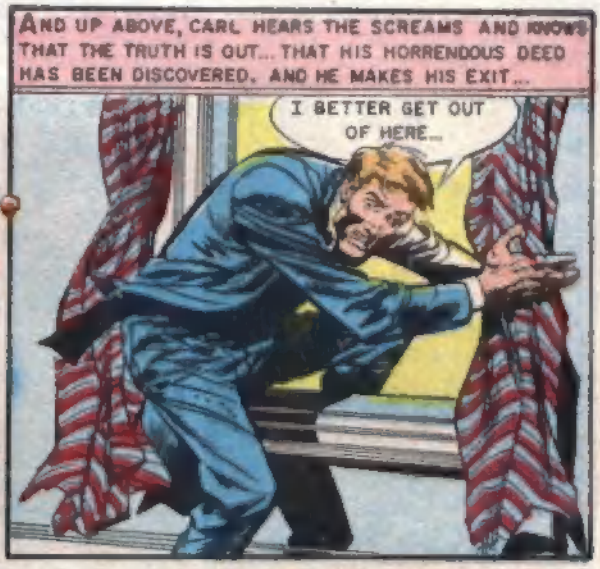

CARL STRUGGLES WITH THE LOCK BUT I HAVE JAMMED IT WELL. HE CURSES... KICKS ME...
OPEN, BLAST YOU...
WHAP

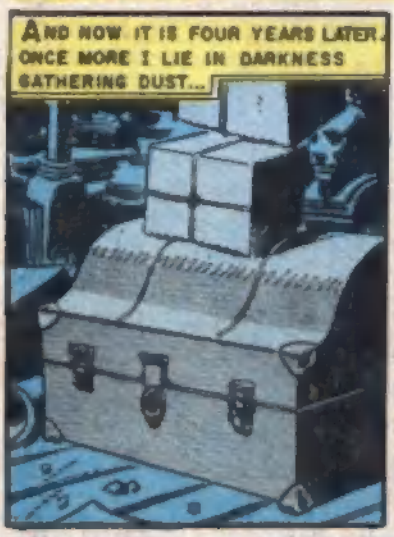
BUT MY LOCK HOLDS FAST. AND NOW CARL IS DESPERATE. THIS WILL CALL FOR A CHANGE OF PLANS. I LISTEN AS HE PHONES...
ER... DESK? OH, WILL YOU SEND UP A BOY? MY WIFE IS FEELING BETTER NOW AND WE'LL BE CHECKING OUT IN THE MORNING. WE HAVE A TRUNK UP HERE WE'D LIKE TO SEND ON AHEAD...

THE BELLBOY ARRIVES WITH HIS DOLLY, AND I FEEL MYSELF LIFTED AND FEEL WILMA'S DRIED AND RIGID REMAINS SHIFT WITHIN ME...
TAKE IT DOWN TO THE EXPRESS OFFICE, SON. HERE'S THE ADDRESS IT GOES TO...
YES, SIR...

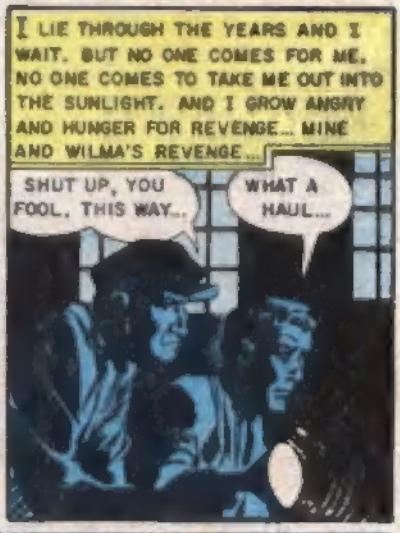
AND NOW I AM BEING WHEELED OUT OF THE ELEVATOR... ACROSS THE CROWDED LOBBY. THIS IS WHAT I PLANNED. THIS IS WHAT WILL EXPOSE MY LOVED ONE'S MURDERER. I SNAP OPEN MY LOCK... SWING WIDE MY LID...
WATCH IT!
OH...
WHAT THE...
GOOD LORD!
CHOKE...

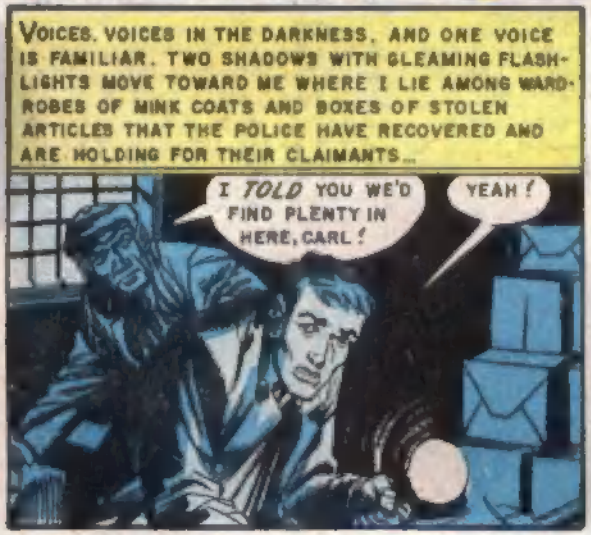

THE LOBBY OF THIS PLACID HONEYMOON HOTEL REVERBERATES WITH SCREAMS AS I SPILL FORTH MY BLOOD-STAINED GORY CONTENTS UPON THE PLUSHLY CARPETED FLOOR...
YAAAAAAAAAAEEE...


AND UP ABOVE, CARL HEARS THE SCREAMS AND KNOWS THAT THE TRUTH IS OUT... THAT HIS HORRENDOUS DEED HAS BEEN DISCOVERED. AND HE MAKES HIS EXIT...
I BETTER GET OUT OF HERE...


AND NOW IT IS FOUR YEARS LATER. ONCE MORE I LIE IN DARKNESS GATHERING DUST...

I LIE IN A WAREHOUSE WHERE THE POLICE HAVE STORED ME UNTIL THEY CAN CATCH CARL AND BRING HIM TO TRIAL AND PUT ME UP AS 'EXHIBIT A'...


I LIE THROUGH THE YEARS AND I WAIT. BUT NO ONE COMES FOR ME. NO ONE COMES TO TAKE ME OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT. AND I GROW ANGRY AND HUNGER FOR REVENGE... MINE AND WILMA'S REVENGE...
SHUT UP, YOU FOOL. THIS WAY...
WHAT A HAUL...


VOICES. VOICES IN THE DARKNESS. AND ONE VOICE IS FAMILIAR. TWO SHADOWS WITH GLEAMING FLASHLIGHTS MOVE TOWARD ME WHERE I LIE AMONG WARDROBES OF MINK COATS AND BOXES OF STOLEN ARTICLES THAT THE POLICE HAVE RECOVERED AND ARE HOLDING FOR THEIR CLAIMANTS...
I TOLD YOU WE'D FIND PLENTY IN HERE, CARL!
YEAH!

THAT NAME. THAT VOICE. FOR FOUR YEARS I HAVE WAITED, STILL FEELING WILMA'S GORY REMAINS WITHIN ME... STILL HATING... STILL PRAYING FOR REVENGE. AND NOW, CARL ROSWELL IS HERE... BESIDE ME. I SHUDDER...
WHAT THE...
LOOK OUT...!

THE BOXES PILED UPON ME TUMBLE WITH A CLATTER TO THE FLOOR. SOMEWHERE A VOICE CALLS OUT...
WHO'S THERE!?
HIDE... QUICK!
I FEEL ROUGH HANDS UPON MY LID...FAMILIAR ROUGH HANDS... CARL'S HANDS. HE SWINGS ME OPEN, STEPS INTO ME, AND I SWALLOW HIM GREEDILY...
HE BRINGS THE LID DOWN...CRINGING SILENTLY...INSIDE ME...LISTENING...
HMMPH! MUSTA BEEN A CAT...
THE FOOTSTEPS DISAPPEAR. CARL TRIES TO OPEN THE LID. BUT I HAVE HIM NOW. I WON'T LET HIM GO. I JAM MY LOCK...LISTENING TO HIM STRUGGLE...
CHOKE... I'M SUFFOCATING IN HERE, WILLY. GET ME OUT. QUICK...
BUT WILLY DOESN'T ANSWER. WILLY HAS RUN OFF, LEAVING CARL TO HIS FATE. CARL GASPS. THE AIR GROWS THIN. FINALLY... IN DESPERATION HE PULLS HIS GUN...FIRING IT THROUGH MY SIDES...
GASP...NEED AIR...GASP...BETTER TO...CHOKE...CHANCE BEING CAUGHT THAN...
AND NOW I TAKE MY REVENGE. I BREATHE DEEP AND THEN EXHALE. I EXHALE ALL OF THE HATE AND LOATHING AND DESIRE FOR REVENGE WITHIN ME. AND I SHRINK. MY SIDES CLOSE DOWN AND MY TOP SHRINKS DOWN AND I GROW SMALL AND CARL SCREAMS UNTIL HE CANNOT SCREAM ANY MORE AND HIS FLESH OOZES FROM THE BULLET HOLES LIKE ICING FROM A BAKER'S DECORATING BAG. AND WHEN THEY COME, THEY FIND ME... A TINY BOX WITH A MOLD OF COMPRESSED BONE INSIDE ME AND A THOUSAND YARDS OF FLESH-RIBBON AROUND ME...
CHOKE...
HEH, HEH. YEP, KIDDIES. WILMA'S OLD TRUNK SHUT CARL UP, ALL RIGHT. ANYBODY CARE FOR A FOOT SQUARE BONE CUBE? IF YOU COULD FIND A MATE FOR IT, YOU COULD MARK 'EM WITH SPOTS AND HAVE A HECK OF A CRAP GAME. NO? AW! OKAY... I'LL USE IT AS A PAPER-WEIGHT TO HOLD DOWN MY NEXT YARN TILL WE MEET AGAIN LATER ON IN MY MUCK MAG. RIGHT NOW, THE VAULT-KEEPER AWAITS WITH HIS OFFERING. I'LL BE SHOVELING OFF...TILL WE REEK AGAIN. 'BYE!

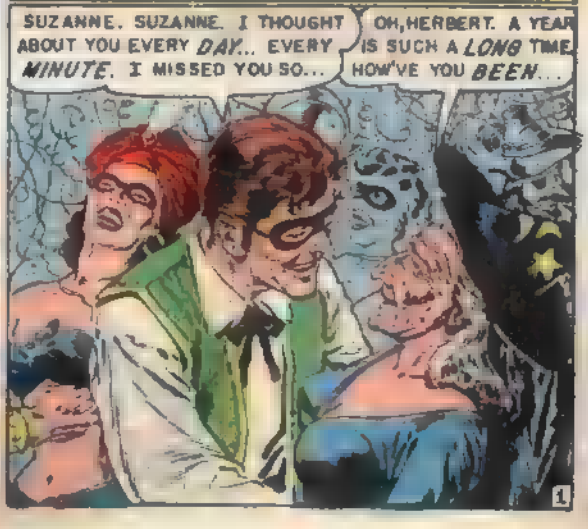
THE VAULT OF HORROR!®

HEH,HEH! YEP, CREEPS. IT'S YOUR *SCREAM-STORY-TELLER* IN *THE VAULT OF HORROR*, *THE VAULT-KEEPER*, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH ONE OF MY *CREEPY COLLECTORS' ITEMS*. FOR *MY* SPOT IN C.K.'S *RAG*...ER... *MAG*, I HAVE CHOSEN A *GAY TALE OF MARDI GRAS MORBIDITY*, ENTITLED...

...ONLY SKIN DEEP!

HERBERT HAD MADE UP HIS MIND. THIS WOULD BE THE LAST TIME HE WOULD COME TO NEW ORLEANS FOR MARDI GRAS WEEK AND SIT IN THIS CROWDED CAFE... WHERE HE'D FIRST MET SUZANNE... AND WAIT FOR HER. THIS WOULD BE THE LAST LONELY YEAR HE'D SPEND, DREAMING THROUGH THE SPRING AND SUMMER AND FALL UNTIL FEBRUARY ROLLED AROUND AGAIN AND HE'D RUSH SOUTH FOR ONE HEAVENLY WEEK. YES, *FIVE YEARS* WAS *LONG ENOUGH*. THIS TIME HE WOULD ASK SUZANNE TO *MARRY* HIM. HE SAT SILENTLY, NURSING HIS DRINK, SEARCHING THE MASKED, COSTUMED THRONG FOR SUZANNE'S FAMILIAR FIGURE. AND THEN SHE WAS COMING TOWARD HIM, OUT OF THE HILARITY AND MADNESS...

AND NOW THEY WERE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER CLOSE AND FEELING HER WOMANLY WARMTH AND HIS YEAR-LONG DREAM WAS A REALITY ONCE MORE...



HERBERT STARED INTO SUZANNE'S EYES...DANCING EYES, THAT SMILED AT HIM FROM BEHIND THE RUBBER MASK SHE WORE...THE SAME MASK SHE'D WORN EVERY YEAR...THE MASK SHE'D WORN WHEN THEY'D FIRST MET, FIVE YEARS AGO...

HOW HAVE I *BEEN*, DARLING? I'VE BEEN GOING *CRAZY*...THINKING ABOUT YOU. I WON'T LET YOU *GO* THIS TIME, SUE. I WON'T LET YOU GO...*EVER AGAIN*.

HUSH, MY SWEET. WE HAVE A *WHOLE WONDERFUL WEEK* AHEAD OF US...

I DON'T *WANT* A WEEK, SUE. I WANT *NEXT YEAR*...AND THE YEAR *AFTER* THAT... A WHOLE *LIFE-TIME* TOGETHER!

DON'T TALK, HERBERT. DON'T *SAY* ANYTHING, *NOW*. *DANCE* WITH ME...

HERBERT FOLLOWED SUZANNE TO THE CROWDED DANCE FLOOR. BENEATH HIS OWN MASK, HE COULD FEEL HIS FACE GROW WARM...THE PERSPIRATION FLOWING. HE HELD HER CLOSE, WHISPERING...

LET'S GET *OUT* OF HERE, SUE. LET'S GO SOMEPLACE WHERE IT'S *QUIET*...WHERE WE CAN *TALK*...

THERE'S NOTHING TO *TALK* ABOUT, HERB. *IS* THERE...?

HE LOOKED AT HER...BLURTING IT OUT...

I WANT TO ASK YOU TO *MARRY* ME, SUE...

HERBIE...

THIS WASN'T THE WAY HE'D PLANNED IT AT ALL: NOT HERE ON THIS JAMMED DANCE FLOOR IN THIS NOISY SMOKEY CAFE. HERBERT HAD DREAMED OF A QUIET SPOT ALONG THE LAKE BENEATH MOSS-LADEN CYPRESS TREES...A *ROMANTIC* PLACE...TO PROPOSE. BUT NOW IT WAS OUT...AND DONE...

YOU...YOU *REALLY WANT TO MARRY ME*, HERBERT...WITHOUT EVEN *KNOWING* WHAT I *LOOK* LIKE...?

I KNOW THAT I *LOVE* YOU, SUE... AND THAT *YOU LOVE ME*. *THAT'S* WHAT'S *IMPORTANT*...

THEY'D STOPPED DANCING NOW, SUE AND HERBERT. THEY STOOD THERE, STARING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES, JOSTLED BY THE GAY CROWD...

ARE YOU *SURE*, HERBIE, DEAR? *SUPPOSE*, BENEATH THIS MASK, I WAS NOT AS YOU PICTURE ME. *SUPPOSE* I WAS...

YOU'LL *NEVER* BE ANYTHING BUT *BEAUTIFUL* TO ME, SUE, NO MATTER *WHAT* YOU LOOK LIKE. IT DOESN'T EVEN *MATTER*...

SHE TOOK HIS HAND...LED HIM FROM THE DANCE FLOOR...LED HIM THROUGH THE CROWD AND OUT OF THE CAFE INTO THE SCREAMING, FLESH-FILLED, GAUDY-COLORED STREET...

OH, HERBIE, I'VE *WAITED FIVE YEARS* FOR YOU TO *SAY THAT*...

WE'VE *WASTED* SO MUCH *TIME*, MY SWEET. I'VE *WANTED* TO *SAY IT* FOR *FIVE YEARS*...

AND NOW THE MADNESS AND THE NOISE AND THE MERRYMAKING WERE FAR BEHIND. OVERHEAD, STARS PEERED THROUGH BOWED CYPRESSES, AND THE LAKE WAS A MIRROR OF BLACK...

NOW THAT WE'RE *AWAY* FROM THE CROWDS AND THE DIN... *ASK ME AGAIN...*

MARRY ME, SUE. I *LOVE* YOU...

SHE CAME INTO HIS ARMS AND HE COULD SEE THAT HER EYES WERE FILLING WITH TEARS...

YES, DARLING. *I'LL MARRY YOU...GLADLY...*

SUE! SWEET! LET ME *KISS* YOU...

HE REACHED FOR HER MASK... TO LIFT IT AWAY... SO HE COULD TOUCH HER LIPS WITH HIS. SHE CAUGHT HIS HAND...

NO, HERBIE! *DON'T!* YOU *SAID* IT DIDN'T *MATTER...*

IT *DOESN'T,* HONEY. I JUST WANT TO *KISS* YOU...

MARRY ME *FIRST,* HERBIE. *THEN* WE CAN UNMASK...WHEN WE MAKE OUR LOVE *COMPLETE...*

NOW?? TONIGHT??

WE COULD *RENT* A *CAR...* *DRIVE UPSTATE.* WE COULD FIND A *JUSTICE OF THE PEACE...*

LET'S GO...

THEY RAN... HAND IN HAND... LIKE CHILDREN. AND SOON, NEW ORLEANS WAS JUST A SKY GLOW TO THE SOUTH, AND THEY WERE HUMMING UPSTATE IN A RENTED CAR... LIKE TWO PHANTOMS...

THERE, DARLING! *THERE'S* A SIGN...

'A.M. MOORE. JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. MARRIAGES PERFORMED. NO WAITING.' *THIS IS IT!*

THE OLD J.P. PERFORMED THE CEREMONY WITH RAISED EYEBROWS. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE'D EVER MARRIED A COUPLE WHOSE FACES HE DID NOT SEE. BUT THEN...IT *WAS MARDI GRAS* WEEK...

I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE...

LATER... THE SMALL HOTEL... THE GRINNING BELL-BOY CARRYING THEIR HASTILY PACKED BAGS... LEADING THE NEWLYWEDS TO THEIR ROOM...

UP FROM *NEW ORLEANS*, EH?

YES. WE WERE JUST MARRIED.

AND NOW... ALONE AT LAST. THE SUDDEN EMBARASSMENT OF THE INTIMATE MOMENT...

WELL, DEAR, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME TO GET A *LOOK* AT YOUR NEW HUSBAND... AND I...

WAIT, HERB! *NOT YET. FIRST*...

HE WATCHED, HIS HEART BEATING LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER IN HIS CHEST, AS SUE REACHED FOR THE LIGHT, FLICKING IT OFF...

HE COULD SEE HER IN THE DIM HALF LIGHT FROM THE NEON SIGN OUTSIDE... SILHOUETTED... MOVING LITHELY... DISROBING...

AND THEN SHE WAS COMING TOWARD HIM AND HE COULD HEAR HER BREATHING... THE SHORT GASPS... EXCITED... PASSIONATE...

LATER... LYING IN THE DARKNESS BESIDE HER, SMOKING A CIGARETTE... HERBIE SMILED...

YOU *KNOW*, DARLING? I NEVER *DID* GET TO SEE YOUR *FACE*...

I KNOW... YAWN...

HER BREATHING BECAME HEAVIER... REGULAR. SHE WAS ASLEEP. HERBIE LAY THERE AWHILE... SMOKING. THE CIGARETTE BURNED DOWN AND HE PUT IT OUT. HIS THOUGHTS DRIFTED BACK ACROSS FIVE YEARS... TO THE FIRST MARDI GRAS WEEK...

I REMEMBER SEEING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME... WEARING THAT REVOLTING HAG-MASK... AND *KNOWING* THAT SHE WAS *BEAUTIFUL*...

YES, THE MASK HAD HIDDEN HER FACE, BUT IT COULDN'T HIDE HER LOVELY VOICE... HER SMILING EYES. AND HER YOUNG CURVACIOUS FIGURE MADE THE MASK SEEM SO OUT OF PLACE...

CARE TO DANCE...?

LOVE TO...

HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D DANCED THAT FIRST NIGHT, NUMBER AFTER NUMBER, UNTIL THE CROWDS HAD GONE AND THE MUSIC HAD ENDED...

CLOSING UP, NOW...

OH...

LET'S WALK...

AND HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D TALKED BY THE LAKE BENEATH THE CYPRESSES AND WATCHED THE SUN COME UP...

TOMORROW, I GO BACK HOME...

WILL YOU COME *NEXT* YEAR... TO *MARDI GRAS?*

HERBIE REMEMBERED HOW HE'D TRIED TO UNMASK SUE THAT FIRST TIME...

BUT I'LL GO AWAY WITHOUT *EVER* KNOWING WHAT YOU *REALLY* LOOK LIKE..

IT'S *BETTER* THAT WAY, HERBIE. YOU'LL *REMEMBER* ME AS YOU *IMAGINE* ME. *FANTASY* IS SOMETIMES *MORE DESIRABLE* THAN *REALITY!*

AND HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D VOWED TO MEET AGAIN THE FOLLOWING YEAR... IN THE SAME CAFE. AND HE'D DREAMED ABOUT HER TILL THEN...

SUZANNE... YOU *REMEMBERED!*

I DIDN'T THINK *YOU'D* COME. I'D *HOPED*... BUT I WAS *AFRAID*...

FIVE YEARS, YEAR AFTER YEAR, MEETING AND DANCING AND TALKING AND FALLING IN LOVE. AND NOW SUE WAS HIS *WIFE*. AND... AND...

... AND, BY GOD, *I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN HER FACE...*

HERBIE REACHED FOR THE LAMP ABOVE THE BED. HE SNAPPED IT ON...

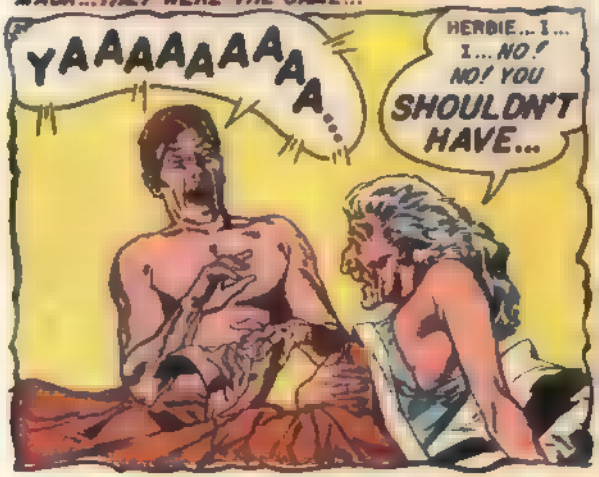
IT *DOESN'T* REALLY *MATTER*, SUE! *REALLY!* IT'S JUST... THAT... THAT...

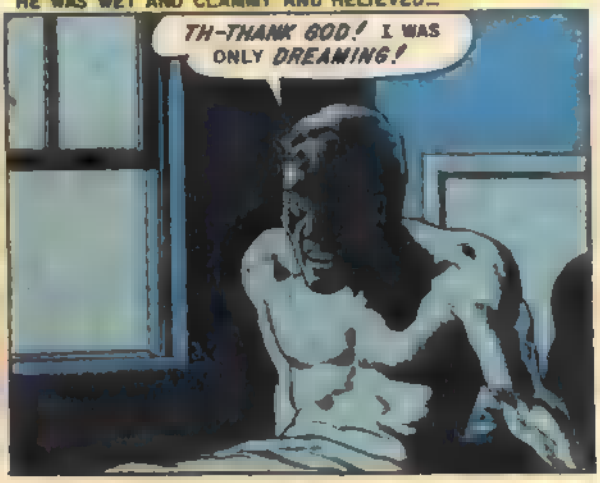
GOOD LORD!

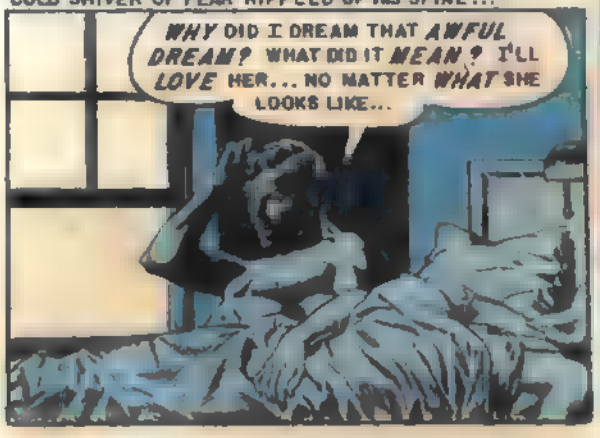
SHE'S STILL MASKED...

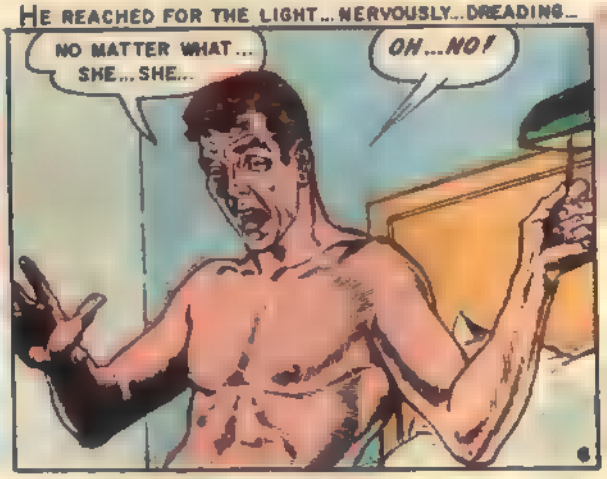
HERBIE REACHED OVER GENTLY... UNTIEING THE SILKEN CORD THAT HELD SUE'S MASK IN PLACE...
GOING TO BED WITH A MASK ON. IT'S RIDICULOUS...

HE LIFTED THE MASK AWAY...
OH, MY GOD!


THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE, THE FACE... THE MASK... THEY WERE THE SAME...
YAAAAAAAAA...
HERBIE... I... I... NO! NO! YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE...


HERBIE SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN THE DARKNESS... GASPING. HE WAS WET AND CLAMMY AND RELIEVED...
TH-THANK GOD! I WAS ONLY DREAMING!

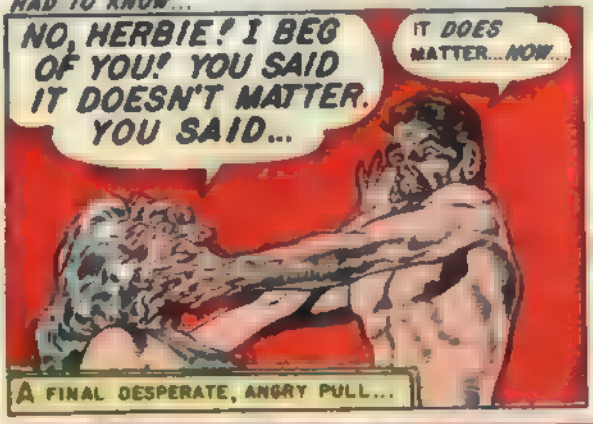

HE GLANCED AT THE WOMAN SLEEPING BESIDE HIM. A COLD SHIVER OF FEAR RIPPLED UP HIS SPINE...
WHY DID I DREAM THAT AWFUL DREAM? WHAT DID IT MEAN? I'LL LOVE HER... NO MATTER WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE...


HE REACHED FOR THE LIGHT... NERVOUSLY... DREADING...
NO MATTER WHAT... SHE... SHE...
OH... NO!

THE MASK...SHE'S STILL WEARING HER MASK...JUST LIKE IN MY DREAM...

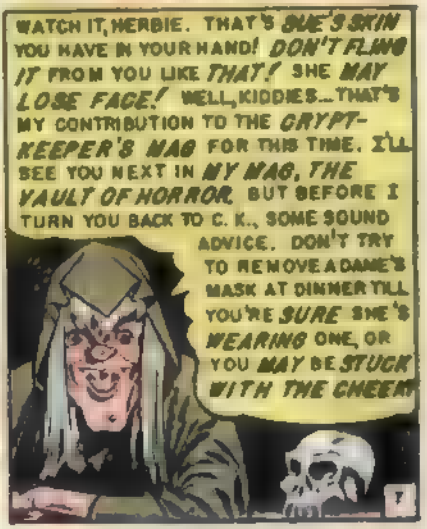
HERBIE STRUGGLED WITH THE STRING...PULLING IT...KNOTTING IT...
BLAST IT...
WHA...? HERBIE... STOP...

SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH TERROR IN HER EYES. HE CLAWED AT THE MASK...
DON'T, HERBIE! DON'T TRY TO TAKE IT OFF!
IT'S TIME I SAW, SUE! IT'S TIME!

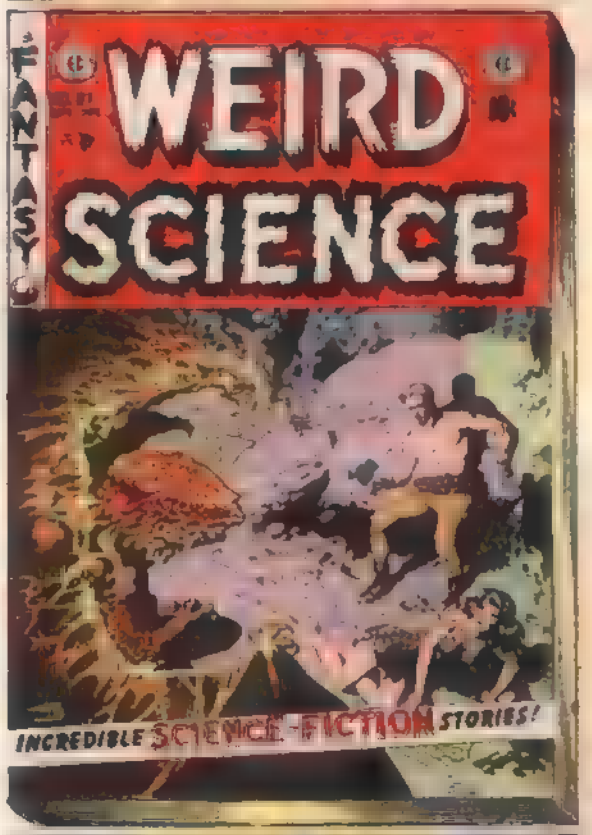

HE WAS A WILD MAN NOW...HIS FINGERS DIGGING IN... TUGGING...PULLING...FRIGHTENED BY THE DREAM. HE HAD TO KNOW...
NO, HERBIE! I BEG OF YOU! YOU SAID IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU SAID...
IT DOES MATTER...NOW...
A FINAL DESPERATE, ANGRY PULL...

THEN...SUE'S SCREAM OF PROTEST...BLOOD-CURDLING... HYSTERICAL...AND THE MASK COMING AWAY...
NO! NO! EEEEEEEEEE...
NOW... WE'LL SEE...

HE HELD THE SOFT WET COVERING IN HIS HAND, STARING DOWN AT HER. HER BLOOD FLOODED OUT OVER THE PILLOW. HER RAW FLESH QUIVERED LIVERLY. HER EYES GLAZED. HER SICKLY GRINNING MOUTH... NOW STRIPPED OF ITS FLESH LIPS... CHOCKED OUT THE WORDS AS HIS STOMACH HEAVED...
I...GURGLE... NEVER...WORE...A MASK... HERBIE...
-CHOKE...


WATCH IT, HERBIE. THAT'S SUE'S SKIN YOU HAVE IN YOUR HAND! DON'T FLING IT FROM YOU LIKE THAT! SHE MAY LOSE FACE! WELL, KIDDIES...THAT'S MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG FOR THIS TIME. I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE VAULT OF HORROR. BUT BEFORE I TURN YOU BACK TO C. K., SOME SOUND ADVICE. DON'T TRY TO REMOVE A DAME'S MASK AT DINNER TILL YOU'RE SURE SHE'S WEARING ONE, OR YOU MAY BE STUCK WITH THE CHEEK!

WE AT E.C. ARE PROUDEST OF OUR SCIENCE - FICTION MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...



LOOK FOR THESE SEALS WHEN YOU BUY!

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TWO-FISTED ANNUAL • TALES OF TERROR

BIG FISH!

As he poised on the edge of the lake, Stan Albert chuckled aloud. This Mr. Karin was a real smart joe. He realized that a small expenditure can often bring fabulous returns if you're not wishy-washy about using methods that are slightly illegal. His offer to Stan was a good example of a shrewd operator skirting with ethics in order to win a potful of money. Stan tensed and his bronzed body arched in a neat dive; hardly a ripple signaled his entry into the water. With powerful strokes he slid quickly under the surface, to the spot where Karin and this dope Foster were fishing from their rowboats. All he had to do for the $500, Stanley reflected as he surged forward underwater, was detach the bait from Foster's fishing line, so that Karin could land a bigger catch. There was $5,000 riding on the contest . . . the man to bring in the larger fish would pocket as much as Stan ordinarily made in a year! Smart of Karin to offer half-a-grand just to make the bet less of a gamble for himself! The easiest dough Stan Albert had ever made!

In the greenish water Stan saw Foster's hook: with a powerful surge Stan slipped through the depths toward the object of his pact with Karin. *500 bucks,* Stanley thought as he reached out and steadied Foster's bobbing line . . . just to help a man win a contest! A small fortune to make certain that the right man brought in a bigger fish than his opponent!

Carefully, his fingers moving with

great delicacy, Stan began to slide the bait free. This guy Foster was a chiseler, too, Stan grinned. His hook was bigger than had been agreed on; this was a battle between two unscruplous operators. And he stood to profit from the contest!

Now the bait was almost off the hook, and Stan felt his chest tightening as his lungs clamored for fresh air. The bait was caught on the bent part of the hook and Stan gave a tug to wrench it free. Another 30 seconds was all he could endure without coming to the surface . . . he'd have to throw discretion to the winds and pull the hook good and hard!

Suddenly the line became taut under his fingers and Stan felt the hook slithering free. With surprise he was aware of the glittering metal moving upward. Then a ripping sensation at his throat sent a spasm of pain stabbing through his body. The big hook had become cruelly imbedded in Stan's throat and was tearing the tender skin open with each passing second. Already the water was becoming discolored with the reddish fluid pouring from his gaping wound!

Stan felt himself growing faint as he struggled futilely to escape the torturous hook, and as the life drained swiftly from his writhing body he was dimly aware that he was being lifted laboriously toward the surface. All around him the water had become a swirling mass of blood . . . his fingers were losing all feeling . . . the taste in his mouth was hot, acid, gagging

In his last moment, before darkness closed in and blotted out Stan Albert's shuddering agony, he knew that Foster . . . working frantically to pull in his line . . . had caught himself a really big fish!

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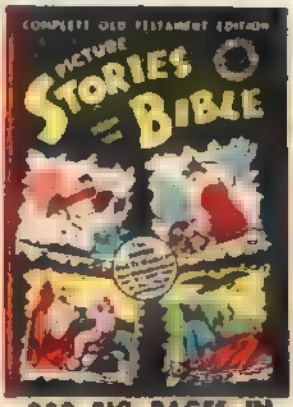

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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! Seems that our Horror Hit Parade has created quite a stir among you hep-hidiots! Here are the latest hadditions to our collection, courtesy of Nelson Bridwell of Oklahoma City, Okla.; Milton Hughes of Maysville, Ky.; Dick Baumann of Glenbeulah, Wis.; Patrick McKernan of Germantown, Pa., Emanuel Peluso of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Richard Renner of Staten Island, N. Y.; Otis Barron of Monsey, N. Y.; Roger Todahl of Fergus Falls, Minn.; Ira Bankoff of Brooklyn, N. Y.; and Lynn Weber of Woodcliff Lake, N. J.

OKLAHOMICIDE
BIER-BARREL POLKA
A-ROUND THE CORONER
ANNIE GORY
SLAUGHTER BOY
I LOATHE YOU CRUELLY
SLIME-HOUSE BLUES
THE TENNESSEE VAULTS
SOMEBODY ROLLED MY PAL
HOW'RE YOU GONNA KEEP 'EM DOWN ON THE FARM (AFTER THEY'VE READ E.C.!)
BETTY NO-HEAD
WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME AGAIN, (HORROR, HORROR!)
I GOT HER SON IN THE MORNING, (TOOK BICARB THAT NIGHT!)
SEVERED HEADS AMONG THE GHOULS
WHO MUNCHED ON THAT BODY IN THE COFFIN, (CHOKE, CHOKE!)
(THE ONE WITH THE PUTRIFIED VEIL!)
WISH YOU WERE-WOLF
OLD CROAKS AT HOME
CHOKE ME, DRILL ME, SQUISH ME

And while in a musical vein, here are some BOP letters from some of you cats . . .

Dear Cryptsy,

Dig this, man! I think your comic books are real gone.

J. Formisano
Newark, N. J.

. . . I'd walk a mile for your mag . . . it's real cool!

Judy Albarado
Chicago, Ill.

. . . Man! That cra-a-a-a-zy cool story, "The Handler," by Ray Bradbury, in the last cool issue of "Tales From The Crypt," was real cool!

Hepster Jim Moran
Richmond, N. Y.

P.S. Dig that cra-a-a-a-azy undertaker!

. . . I want to congratulate you and your "crane-federates" for turning out such super-George mags

I'd like to start an E.C. fan club. Anyone interested can write to . . .

Lynn Weber
Woodcliff Lake, N. J.

Anyone interested can write to US, Lynn! Yep . . . my idiot editors have informed me that, due to the huge quantity of requests (two!) the E.C. organization is contemplating starting some sort of fan club. The best minds (?) are now busily at work contemplating. Further announcements will be forthcoming when the contemplations have been completed. But don't worry . . . it'll cost money! See THE VAULT OF HORROR No. 33 for the next exciting episode in this latest money-grabbing effort!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

If someone doesn't have enough sense to buy E.C., then he's probably too stupid to understand them anyway.

Bob West
Oklahoma City, Okla.

. . . I can't help thinking how much Shakespeare missed by not reading or writing stories like yours. They're super!

Ronald Frager
Dayton, Ohio

. . . How in the heck could a human live in the same apartment with a corpse for about two months? I'm referring to "Curiosity Killed . . ." in T.C. No. 36. Wouldn't it . . . well . . . kind of smell? Certainly, when Mrs. Clayton called upon Mr. Durand, and he opened the door wide open, wouldn't she have smelled the smell from the smell? If not, please explain.

Jack Laws
San Antonio, Texas

Chlorophyll!

Dear C.K.,

You have forgotten an important character in horror literature . . . the GHOUL. Won't you try to get a GHOULish story in your books?

Danny Simons
Ardmore, Pa.

We may oblige you sooner than you think, Danny!

In closing, the usual commercial announcements: The third annual TALES OF TERROR, E.C.'s horror anthology, 128 pages of chills (?), sixteen complete scream stories . . . not counting 4 texts . . . reprints from 1952 . . . is now available for 25c, your name, and your address! Subscriptions to any E.C. mag will cost you the unheard of price of 75c . . . ¾ of a dollar . . . for six . . . half-a-dozen . . . issues. (E.C. fan club? They're still contemplating!) Address where you send for all this drivel . . . or where YOU send US drivel . . . is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 39
225 Lafayette St.
N.Y.C. 12, N. Y.

ERNIE VISITED THE DOCTOR BUT NEVER EXPECTED THE

LAST LAUGH

ERNIE SHIFTED UNCOMFORTABLY ON THE LEATHER CHAIR IN THE DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM. FROM TIME TO TIME, THE EXPRESSION ON HIS LOOSE FLABBY-FEATURED FACE WOULD CHANGE FROM ONE OF ANXIETY TO THAT OF A CHEERFUL GRIN, AND HE WOULD CHUCKLE SILENTLY OR LAUGH OUT LOUD. WHEN THAT HAPPENED, HE WOULD CLUTCH HIS STOMACH AND THE GRIN WOULD FADE AND THE ANXIETY WOULD RETURN ONCE MORE. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY AFTER HIS MOST RECENT OUTBURST OF HILARITY AND LOOKED UP WITH RELIEF AS DOCTOR FALDER ENTERED...

I'M SORRY I KEPT YOU *WAITING*, SIR, BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING *PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES* AT HOME. YOUR CALL SEEMED *URGENT*. WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE *TROUBLE?*

BILL ELDER

IT'S MY *STOMACH*, DOC! I GOT *PAINS!* IT *HURTS* ME... *HERE*... EVERY TIME I *LAUGH!*

DOCTOR FALDER SLIPPED OUT OF HIS OVERCOAT..

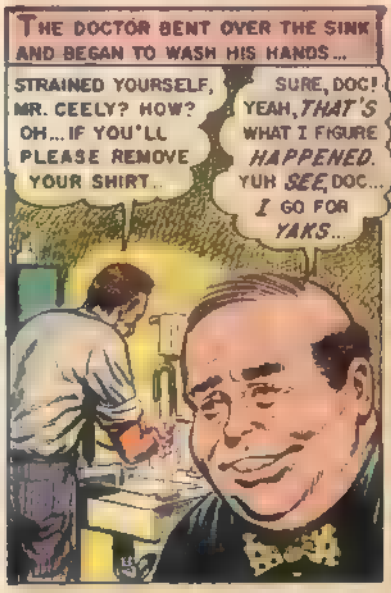
ALL RIGHT! WE'LL TAKE A *LOOK* AT YOU. IF YOU'LL *STEP THIS WAY*, MR...MR... I'M AFRAID I *DIDN'T* CATCH THE *NAME*...

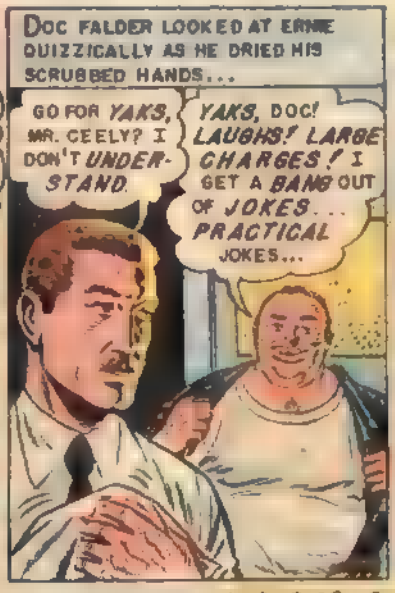
CEELY, DOC! *ERNIE* CEELY! I'M *NEW* 'ROUND THESE PARTS! BEEN IN TOWN ABOUT *TWO WEEKS*.

THE DOCTOR LED MR. CEELY INTO HIS EXAMINATION ROOM AND ROLLED UP HIS SLEEVES...

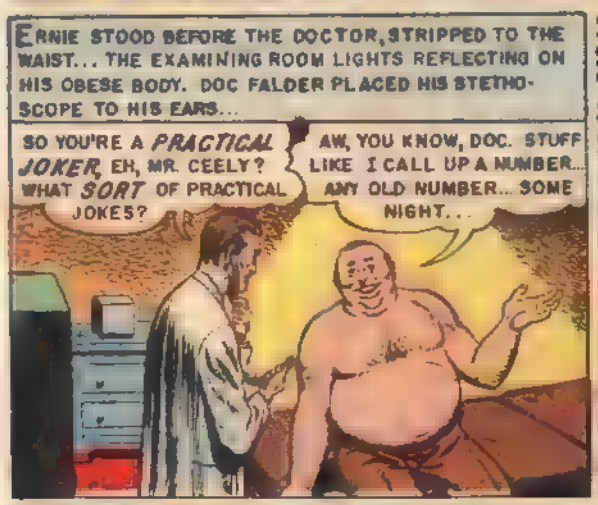
MIGHT AS WELL GIVE YOU A *THOROUGH* GOING-OVER, MR. CEELY. WHILE I'M *EXAMINING* YOU, YOU CAN *TELL* ME ABOUT THIS PAIN YOU'VE BEEN HAVING...

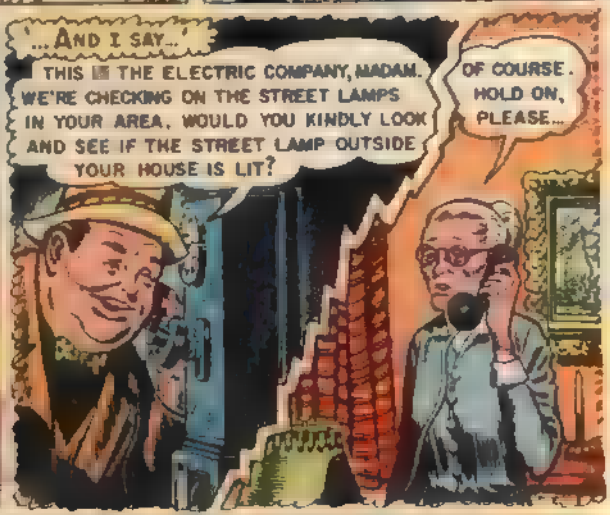
STARTED LAST WEEK. I MUSTA *STRAINED* MYSELF OR SOMETHIN'.

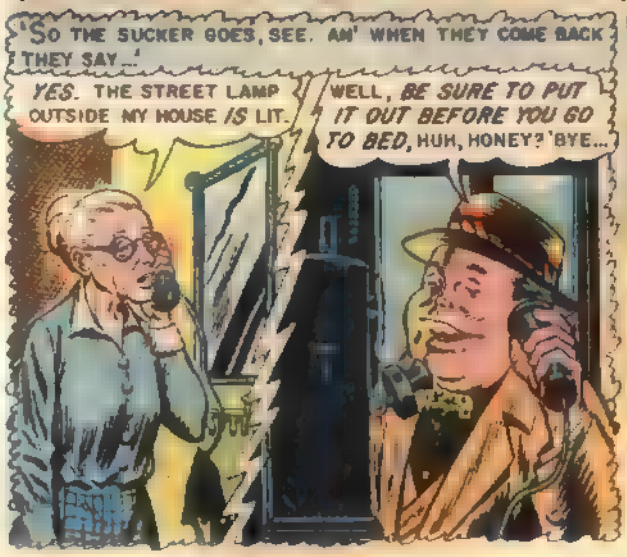

THE DOCTOR BENT OVER THE SINK AND BEGAN TO WASH HIS HANDS...
STRAINED YOURSELF, MR. CEELY? HOW? OH... IF YOU'LL PLEASE REMOVE YOUR SHIRT..
SURE, DOC! YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I FIGURE HAPPENED. YUH SEE, DOC... I GO FOR YAKS...

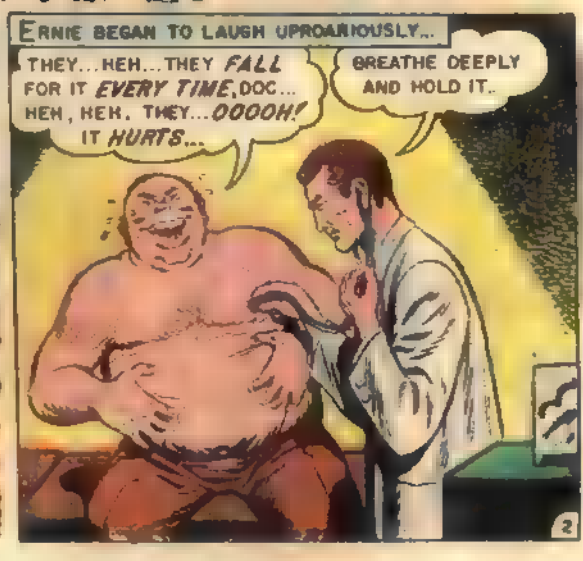

DOC FALDER LOOKED AT ERNIE QUIZZICALLY AS HE DRIED HIS SCRUBBED HANDS...
GO FOR YAKS, MR. CEELY? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YAKS, DOC! LAUGHS! LARGE CHARGES! I GET A BANG OUT OF JOKES... PRACTICAL JOKES...

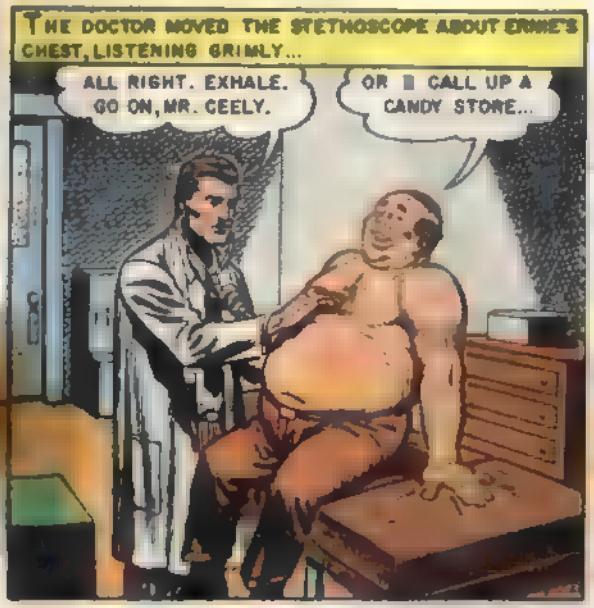
THE DOCTOR SLIPPED INTO HIS WHITE LAB COAT...
OH, I SEE!
AN' LAST WEEK I NEARLY DIED LAUGHIN'. I PULLED THIS GAG, SEE... AND I FIGURE I STRAINED MYSELF LAUGHIN' OVER IT.


ERNIE STOOD BEFORE THE DOCTOR, STRIPPED TO THE WAIST... THE EXAMINING ROOM LIGHTS REFLECTING ON HIS OBESE BODY. DOC FALDER PLACED HIS STETHOSCOPE TO HIS EARS...
SO YOU'RE A PRACTICAL JOKER, EH, MR. CEELY? WHAT SORT OF PRACTICAL JOKES?
AW, YOU KNOW, DOC. STUFF LIKE I CALL UP A NUMBER... ANY OLD NUMBER... SOME NIGHT...

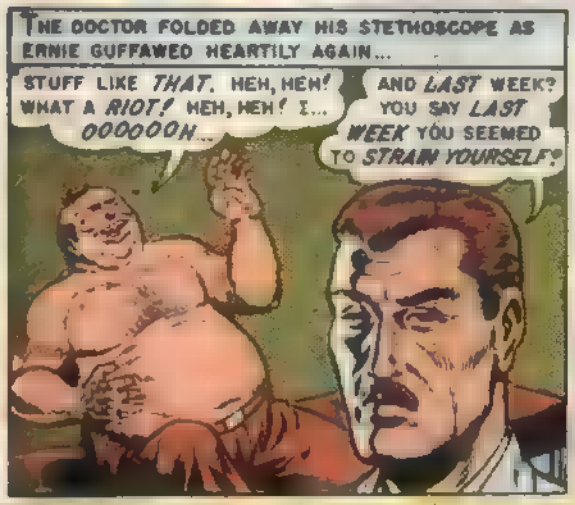

'...AND I SAY...'
THIS IS THE ELECTRIC COMPANY, MADAM. WE'RE CHECKING ON THE STREET LAMPS IN YOUR AREA. WOULD YOU KINDLY LOOK AND SEE IF THE STREET LAMP OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE IS LIT?
OF COURSE. HOLD ON, PLEASE...

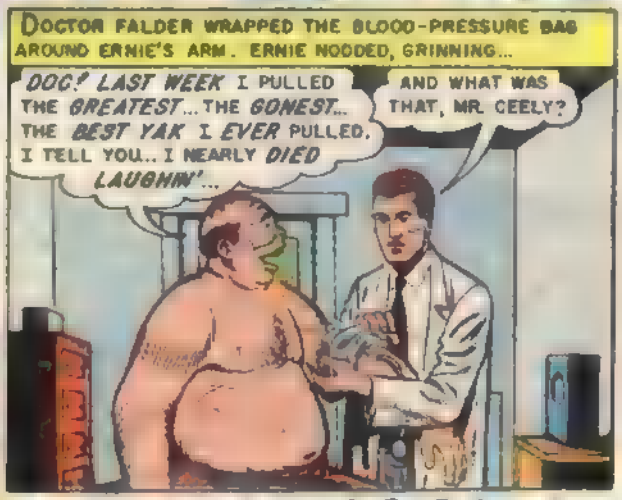

'SO THE SUCKER GOES, SEE. AN' WHEN THEY COME BACK THEY SAY...'
YES. THE STREET LAMP OUTSIDE MY HOUSE IS LIT.
WELL, BE SURE TO PUT IT OUT BEFORE YOU GO TO BED, HUH, HONEY? 'BYE...

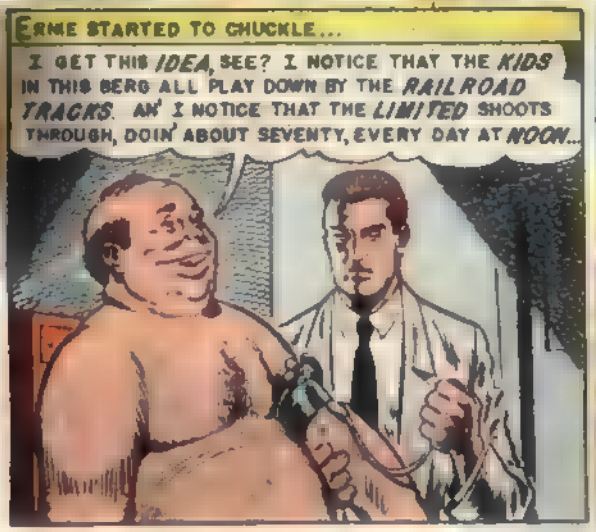

ERNIE BEGAN TO LAUGH UPROARIOUSLY...
THEY... HEH... THEY FALL FOR IT EVERY TIME, DOC... HEH, HEH. THEY... OOOOH! IT HURTS...
BREATHE DEEPLY AND HOLD IT..

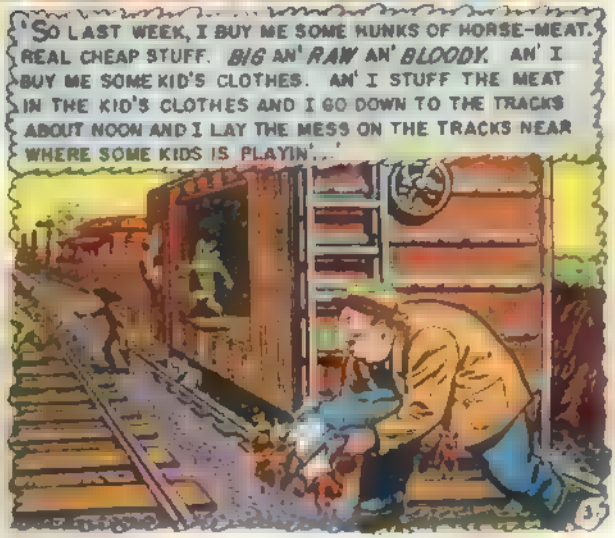

THE DOCTOR MOVED THE STETHOSCOPE ABOUT ERNIE'S CHEST, LISTENING GRIMLY...
ALL RIGHT. EXHALE. GO ON, MR. CEELY.
OR I CALL UP A CANDY STORE...

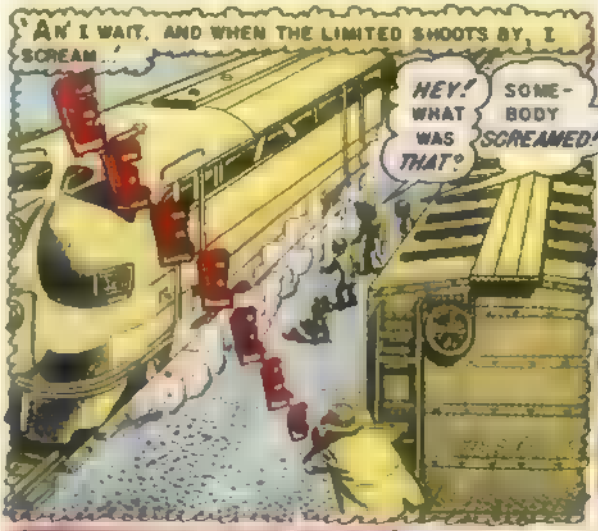
'AN' I SAY...'
ROSIE'S CANDY STORE? YOU GOT PHILIP MORRIS IN A CARTON?
YES, SIR!
WELL, LET 'IM OUT, HUH? HIS DINNER'S GETTIN' COLD.

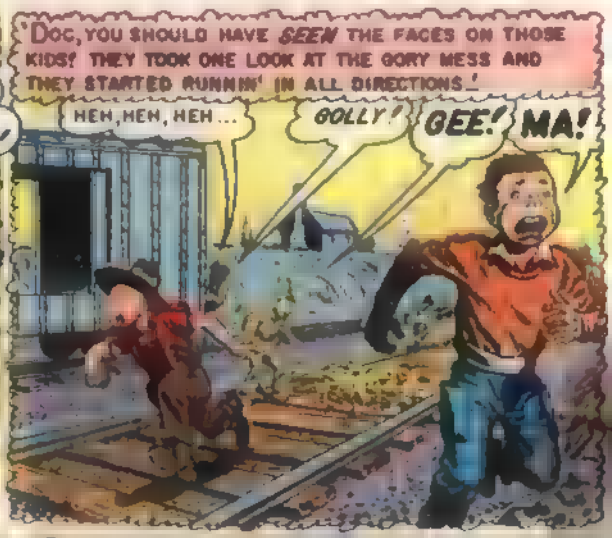

THE DOCTOR FOLDED AWAY HIS STETHOSCOPE AS ERNIE GUFFAWED HEARTILY AGAIN...
STUFF LIKE THAT. HEH, HEH! WHAT A RIOT! HEH, HEH! I... OOOOOOH...
AND LAST WEEK? YOU SAY LAST WEEK YOU SEEMED TO STRAIN YOURSELF?

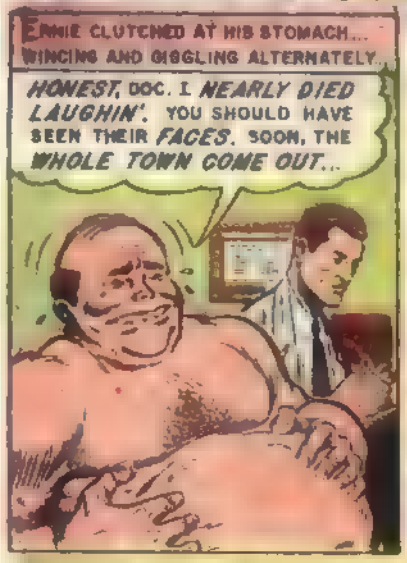

DOCTOR FALDER WRAPPED THE BLOOD-PRESSURE BAG AROUND ERNIE'S ARM. ERNIE NODDED, GRINNING...
DOC! LAST WEEK I PULLED THE GREATEST... THE GONEST... THE BEST YAK I EVER PULLED, I TELL YOU... I NEARLY DIED LAUGHIN'...
AND WHAT WAS THAT, MR. CEELY?


ERNIE STARTED TO CHUCKLE...
I GET THIS IDEA, SEE? I NOTICE THAT THE KIDS IN THIS BERG ALL PLAY DOWN BY THE RAILROAD TRACKS. AN' I NOTICE THAT THE LIMITED SHOOTS THROUGH, DOIN' ABOUT SEVENTY, EVERY DAY AT NOON...


'SO LAST WEEK, I BUY ME SOME HUNKS OF HORSE-MEAT. REAL CHEAP STUFF. BIG AN' RAW AN' BLOODY. AN' I BUY ME SOME KID'S CLOTHES. AN' I STUFF THE MEAT IN THE KID'S CLOTHES AND I GO DOWN TO THE TRACKS ABOUT NOON AND I LAY THE MESS ON THE TRACKS NEAR WHERE SOME KIDS IS PLAYIN'...'

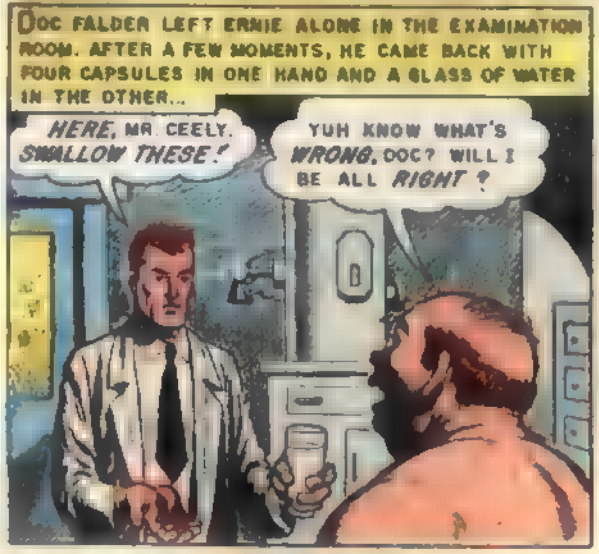

'AN' I WAIT, AND WHEN THE LIMITED SHOOTS BY, I SCREAM..'
HEY! WHAT WAS THAT?
SOME-BODY SCREAMED!

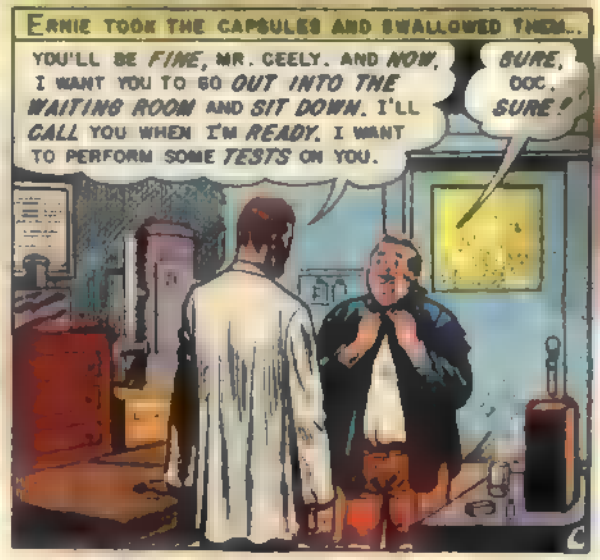

'DOC, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE FACES ON THOSE KIDS! THEY TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE GORY MESS AND THEY STARTED RUNNIN' IN ALL DIRECTIONS.'
HEH, HEH, HEH...
GOLLY!
GEE!
MA!


ERNIE CLUTCHED AT HIS STOMACH... WINCING AND GIGGLING ALTERNATELY...
HONEST, DOC. I NEARLY DIED LAUGHIN'. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEIR FACES. SOON, THE WHOLE TOWN COME OUT...

IT TOOK 'EM MAYBE THREE HOURS BEFORE THEY FOUND OUT IT WEREN'T NO KID GOT KILLED. SIRENS... AND AMBULANCES RUNNIN' AROUND LIKE CRAZY...
AND YOU... LAUGHING...

DYIN'...
WAIT HERE, MR. CEELY. I'LL BE A MOMENT...


DOC FALDER LEFT ERNIE ALONE IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, HE CAME BACK WITH FOUR CAPSULES IN ONE HAND AND A GLASS OF WATER IN THE OTHER...
HERE, MR. CEELY. SWALLOW THESE!
YUH KNOW WHAT'S WRONG, DOC? WILL I BE ALL RIGHT?


ERNIE TOOK THE CAPSULES AND SWALLOWED THEM...
YOU'LL BE FINE, MR. CEELY. AND NOW, I WANT YOU TO GO OUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM AND SIT DOWN. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M READY. I WANT TO PERFORM SOME TESTS ON YOU.
SURE, DOC. SURE!

ERNIE WENT OUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM AND SAT DOWN. HE COULD HEAR DOCTOR FALDER MOVING EQUIPMENT AROUND BEHIND THE CLOSED EXAMINATION ROOM DOOR...

JUST *RELAX*, MR. CEELY. I'LL BE *READY* FOR YOU *SHORTLY*...

OKAY, DOC!

FIFTEEN MINUTES WENT BY. ERNIE BEGAN TO GROW IMPATIENT. TWENTY MINUTES. ERNIE FELT A FUNNY PIERCING PAIN IN HIS STOMACH. THIRTY MINUTES. FINALLY...

I'M *READY*, MR. CEELY. WILL YOU COME *IN* NOW?

DOC! SOMETHIN'S *HAPPENIN'!* *HERE!* IT *HURTS*... EVEN WHEN I *DON'T* LAUGH, *NOW*...

ERNIE FOLLOWED THE DOCTOR INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM ONCE MORE.

GET *COMPLETELY UNDRESSED*, MR. CEELY... SAVE FOR YOUR *SHORTS!* AND WHILE YOU'RE *DOING* THAT, LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY...

OKAY, DOC. BUT *SEE* WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THOSE *NEW* PAINS I GOT *NOW*, HUH?

THE DOCTOR NODDED GRIMLY, WATCHING ERNIE DISROBE. HE BEGAN TO TALK...

THERE WAS A *FAMILY* IN THIS TOWN, MR. CEELY! A *MOTHER*, A *FATHER*, AND *TWO CHILDREN*... *BOYS*... ONE, *EIGHT*... THE YOUNG ONE, *THREE*...

CAN'T *STAND* KIDS! BOY, YOU SHOULD HAVE *SEEN THEIR FACES* WHEN THEY *SAW* THAT *BLOODY MESS*...

'ONE DAY THE MOTHER SENT HER TWO BOYS OUT TO PLAY. SHE TOLD THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD TO WATCH THE THREE-YEAR-OLD AND KEEP HIM OUT OF MISCHIEF...'

SEE THAT STEVEY DOESN'T GET HIMSELF *DIRTY*, JEFFREY.

YES, MAMA!

'BUT THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD WANDERED AWAY... LEFT THE THREE-YEAR-OLD... DISREGARDED HIS MOTHER'S WISHES. AND THE THREE-YEAR-OLD GOT ALL MUDDY PLAYING WHERE HE SHOULDN'T HAVE...'

OH, STEVEY! JUST LOOK AT YOU!

'THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD WENT TO PLAY WITH HIS FRIENDS. HE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIS LITTLE THREE YEAR OLD BROTHER UNTIL HE HEARD A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM...'

EEEEEEEEE

HEY! WHAT WAS *THAT*?

STEVEY!

JEFFREY THOUGHT THAT THE BLOODY REMAINS LYING UPON THE RAILROAD TRACKS WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, STEVEY! FEAR CLUTCHED AT HIS LITTLE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD HEART. HE STARTED RUNNING HOME WILDLY. HE NEVER SAW THE TRUCK..

MA! MA!

LOOK OUT!

THE MOTHER RUSHED OUT OF HER HOUSE WHEN SHE HEARD HER OLDER SON'S SHRIEK OF PAIN AND THE SQUEAL OF THE TRUCK'S BRAKES..

JEFFREY! MY BABY!

IN HER FRIGHTENED ANXIETY, THE MOTHER'D THOUGHTLESSLY LEFT HER THREE-YEAR-OLD SON IN THE TUB WHERE SHE'D BEEN BATHING HIM..

MAMA...SOB... MAMA...

ERNIE STOOD, DISROBED, BEFORE THE DOCTOR, STARING AT HIS WIDE FLAMING EYES...

YOU!

YES, MR. CEELY. THAT WAS *MY FAMILY'S STORY.* THE *EIGHT*-YEAR-OLD *DIED* FROM BEING STRUCK BY THE TRUCK. THE *BABY DROWNED.* MY *WIFE* DROPPED DEAD OF A *HEART ATTACK*...

DOCTOR FALDER'S GRIP WAS LIKE A VISE OF STEEL AS HE TIED ERNIE CEELY TO THE EXAMINATION TABLE...

YOU SAY YOU *ALMOST DIED LAUGHING* OVER YOUR PRACTICAL JOKE, MR. CEELY? WELL, *NOW YOU WILL DIE LAUGHING!* THOSE *CAPSULES* I GAVE YOU CONTAINED *FISH HOOKS*... *BARBED* LITTLE FISH HOOKS..

NO! NO!

DOCTOR FALDER ROLLED OUT THE EQUIPMENT HE'D PREPARED AND SET IT ABOUT THE STRIPPED RECLINING FIGURE OF SCREAMING ERNIE CEELY. THEN THE DOC TURNED ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT ON. AND THE FEATHERS TICKLED THE SOLES OF ERNIE'S FEET AND NUDGED HIS RIBS AND UNDER HIS ARMS AND BEHIND HIS EARS...

DIE LAUGHING, ERNIE! *DIE LAUGHING!*

HEH...HEH...NO...HEH...NO...

YAAAAAAAHHH!

HEH... HEH...

AND SO WE *LEAVE* ERNIE CEELY WITH THE LITTLE *FISH HOOKS* IN HIS *QUIVERING STOMACH,* KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THE DOC WILL MAKE *SURE* ERNIE GETS THE *POINT* OF *THIS* GAG... *BARBED POINTS!* IN *FACT,* ERNIE... THIS *LAST* YAK WILL *KILL* YOU! AND NOW, *THE OLD WITCH* AWAITS, WITH *HER KETTLE* OF *KRAWLY, KREEP-KOOKERY.*

'BYE, NOW! OOPS ERNIE JUST HAD HIS *LAST BELLY LAUGH!* A REAL *RIB-TICKLER.* *BUSTED* HIS *GUT,* HE DID!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! AND NOW THAT YOUR *APPETITES* FOR *HORROR* HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY *PIQUED* BY MY *FELLOW SLIME-SLINGERS*...*G.K.* AND *V.K.*, IT'S TIME FOR *ME* TO FEED YOU *FOUL FARE*. SO HOP INTO THE *HAUNT OF FEAR*, FIENDS, AND YOUR *HOSTESS* IN *HEAVES*, *THE OLD WITCH*, WILL DISH OUT THE *DELICIOUS DELVING* INTO THE *DELIRIOUS*, CALLED...

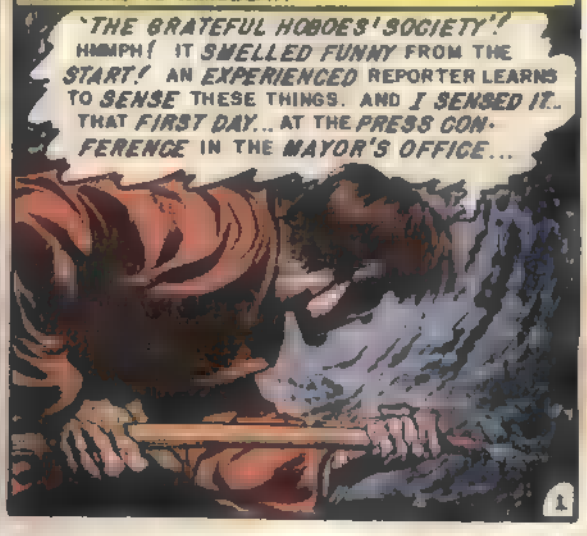
MOURNIN' MESS

THE CEMETERY LAY SILENT BENEATH A COLD MOON THAT SKIPPED IN AND OUT FROM BEHIND DARK CLOUDS THAT RACED ALONG ON A BRISK NOVEMBER WIND. BELOW, THE MUFFLED SOUND OF DIGGING ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT. A MAN STOOD KNEE-DEEP IN AN EXCAVATION AMONG THE FLAT PLAINLY-MARKED GRAVES, ANXIOUSLY SINKING HIS SPADE INTO THE SOFT EARTH AND TOSSING IT ONTO A GROWING PILE BESIDE HIM. EVERY SO OFTEN THE MAN WOULD STOP HIS WORK, LISTEN, AND THEN...HEARING NOTHING...CONTINUE DIGGING...

I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING *SCREWY* ABOUT THIS *WHOLE SET-UP*. RIGHT FROM THE *BEGINNING*, I FELT IT. NOW I'M GOING TO *FIND OUT*...*FOR SURE*...

THE MAN FURIOUSLY SPADED THE BLACK LOAM OUT OF THE EVER-DEEPENING HOLE...ALL THE WHILE MUMBLING TO HIMSELF...

'THE GRATEFUL HOBOES' SOCIETY'! HMMPH! IT *SMELLED FUNNY* FROM THE *START!* AN *EXPERIENCED* REPORTER LEARNS TO *SENSE* THESE THINGS. AND *I SENSED IT*... THAT *FIRST DAY*...AT THE *PRESS CONFERENCE* IN THE *MAYOR'S OFFICE*...



'I REMEMBER HOW POMPOUS OLD MAYOR MERK STOOD BEFORE US AND WHEEZED OUT HIS ANNOUNCEMENT...'

GENTLEMEN' OUR FAIR CITY HAS LONG HAD THE PROBLEM OF *DISPOSING* OF ITS *DERELICTS* AND *HOMELESS ONES* WHO *PASS AWAY* WITH *NO FRIENDS OR RELATIVES* TO *PROPERLY BURY THEM*...

HERETOFORE, THESE WRETCHED UNFORTUNATES HAVE BEEN *LAID TO REST* BY *OUR CITY* IN *POTTER'S FIELDS* MAINTAINED BY *YOUR TAXES. NOW*, THIS SAD RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN TAKEN *OUT* OF *YOUR CITY'S HANDS*. GENTLEMEN...

...MAY I PRESENT *FELIX J. COPEHARD*, REPRESENTATIVE OF *'THE GRATEFUL HOBOES' SOCIETY'*, WHO WILL TELL YOU OF THE *WONDERFUL OFFER* HIS ORGANIZATION HAS *MADE*... THE OFFER *I HAVE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED!* MR. COPEHARD...

'I REMEMBER SHIFTY-EYED MR. COPEHARD... SMILING... SOFT-SPOKEN...'

GENTLEMEN... '*THE GRATEFUL HOBOES, OUTCASTS, AND UNWANTEDS' LAYAWAY SOCIETY!*'... THE *GRATEFUL HOBOES' SOCIETY'* FOR SHORT... WAS FORMED BY A GROUP OF *SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN* WHO FELT THAT THEY *OWED A DEBT OF GRATITUDE* TO *THIS FAIR CITY*..

ALL THE *MEMBERS* OF THIS ORGANIZATION *CAME* TO THIS CITY AS *DOWN-AND-OUTERS, DRIFTERS, DERELICTS*, OR *JUST PLAIN BUMS*. BUT *HERE*, THEY FOUND *OPPORTUNITY. HERE*, THEY FOUND *FINANCIAL SUCCESS*. AND *SO... IN GRATITUDE*... THEY HAVE *BANDED TOGETHER* TO *AID* AND *ENDOW* OTHERS *LESS FORTUNATE* THAN THEMSELVES... *OTHER* DRIFTERS AND UNWANTEDS. THEY HAVE PURCHASED A *SMALL PARCEL OF LAND* IN ONE OF OUR CITY'S SUBURBS, *LANDSCAPED* IT... AND HAVE TURNED IT INTO A *CEMETERY*...

...A *BEAUTIFUL CEMETERY*... WHERE THE *POOR OUTCASTS* WHO HAVE *NOT* BEEN AS FORTUNATE AS THEY MAY BE *LAID TO FINAL REST IN DIGNITY* WHEN THEY *PASS* FROM OUR *MORTAL WORLD*...

'THE GRATEFUL HOBOES'... WHO PREFER TO REMAIN *ANONYMOUS*... HAVE CREATED AN *ENDOWMENT FUND* THROUGH *MUTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS*, WITH WHICH *ALL FUNERAL* AND *CEMETERY UPKEEP EXPENSES* WILL BE *MET*. NO *LONGER* WILL YOUR *TAXES* BE NEEDED FOR THIS PURPOSE. NO *LONGER* WILL *SHODDY POTTER'S FIELDS* MAR THE *BEAUTY* OF OUR FAIR CITY'S SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE. NO *LONGER* WILL...

'YES, IT SMELLED FUNNY ALL RIGHT. I REMEMBER LISTENING TO MR. COPEHARD RAVE ON, EXPOUNDING UPON THE WONDERFUL GROUP OF PHILANTHROPISTS HE REPRESENTED... AND I REMEMBER FINALLY ASKING...'

MY *QUESTION*, MR. COPEHARD IS: *WHY* SHOULD A GROUP OF *RICH MEN* SUDDENLY BECOME CONCERNED ABOUT SOME DERELICTS' *FUNERALS*?

I *EXPLAINED*, SIR. *ALL* OF THESE MEN...

YES...YES...THEY WERE *ALL ONCE BUMS THEMSELVES*. YOU *EXPLAINED* THAT. BUT *WHY* WAIT UNTIL THESE DERELICTS *DIE* BEFORE *HELPING* THEM! COULDN'T THE MONEY BE PUT TO *BETTER* USE BY *REHABILITATING THEM* WHILE THEY ARE *ALIVE*?

'*THE GRATEFUL HOBOES*' ARE *ALL SELF-MADE MEN*, SIR. *THEY* RECEIVED NO HELP WHEN *THEY* WERE DOWN...

THE *PRESENT* CONDITION OF THE DERELICT IN OUR CITY DOES NOT *CONCERN* THESE MEN. LET THE DERELICT *RISE UP* AS *THEY* HAVE DONE. BUT WHEN THE DERELICT CAN *NO LONGER RISE UP*... WHEN HE HAS *PASSED ON*... *THEN* LET HIM BE *RAISED IN FINAL REST*...

I *STILL* DON'T GET IT...

'I REMEMBER ATTENDING THAT FIRST FUNERAL... AND SEEING '*THE GRATEFUL HOBOES' SOCIETY'S*' CEMETERY FOR THE FIRST TIME...'

ASHES TO ASHES... DUST TO DUST...

NICE PLACE, SWEENEY...

YEAH, *BEAUTIFUL!* IT ALMOST *PAYS* TO *DIE PENNILESS*...

'AND I REMEMBER IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, RETURNING FROM TIME TO TIME AND SEEING THE ROLLING LAWNS WITH THE SIMPLE GRAVE MARKERS...'

HOW COME NO *GRAVE MOUNDS*?

I ONLY *WORK* HERE, MISTER. THE *SOCIETY* SAYS THIS IS THE *MODERN WAY* A CEMETERY SHOULD *LOOK*...SO *I DO LIKE THEY SAY*...

'BUT AFTER A WHILE THE WORK OF '*THE GRATEFUL HOBOES' SOCIETY*' BECAME STALE NEWS AND I TURNED TO OTHER THINGS. THEN, THIS MORNING, MY EDITOR CALLED ME IN...'

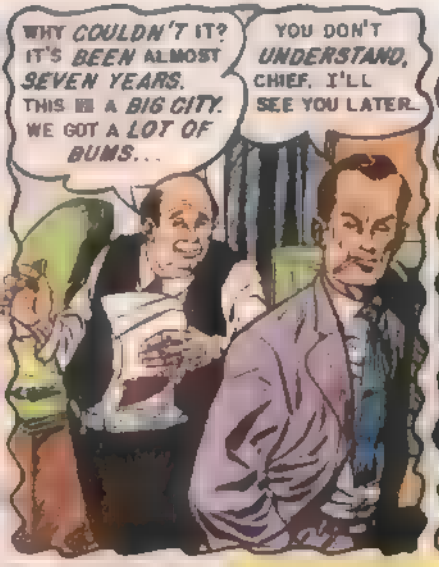
SWEENEY. YOU COVERED THE OPENING OF 'THE GRATEFUL HOBOES' SOCIETY'S' CEMETERY FOR OUTCASTS AND UNWANTEDS, DIDN'T YOU?

YEAH, CHIEF! WHAT'S UP?

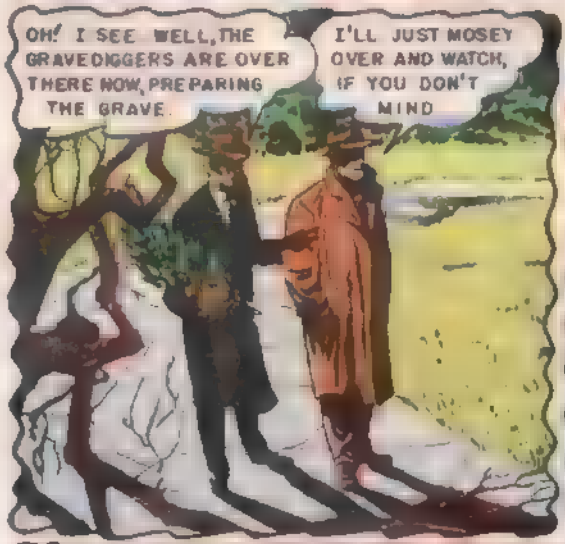
WELL ACCORDING TO THE *OBIT DEPARTMENT* THEY'RE BURYING THE *THOUSANDTH DERELICT* TODAY. TAKE A RUN OUT AND *COVER* IT FOR US, HUH? IT *OUGHT* TO BE WORTH A *PARAGRAPH* OR *TWO*...

SURE, CHIEF! HEY, DID YOU SAY *THE THOUSANDTH DERELICT*?

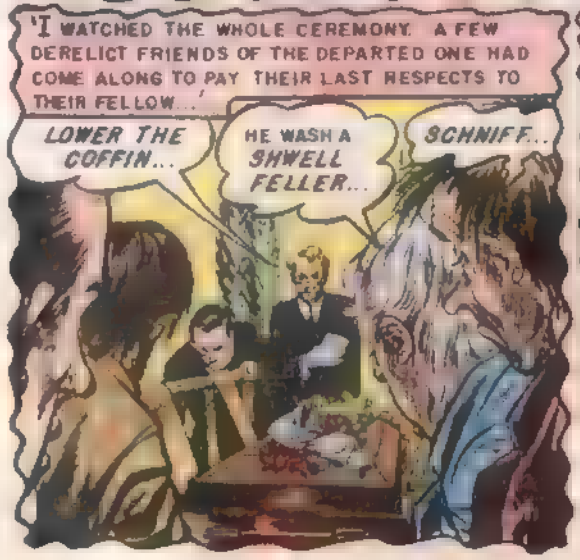
YEAH, WHY?
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT COULDN'T BE...

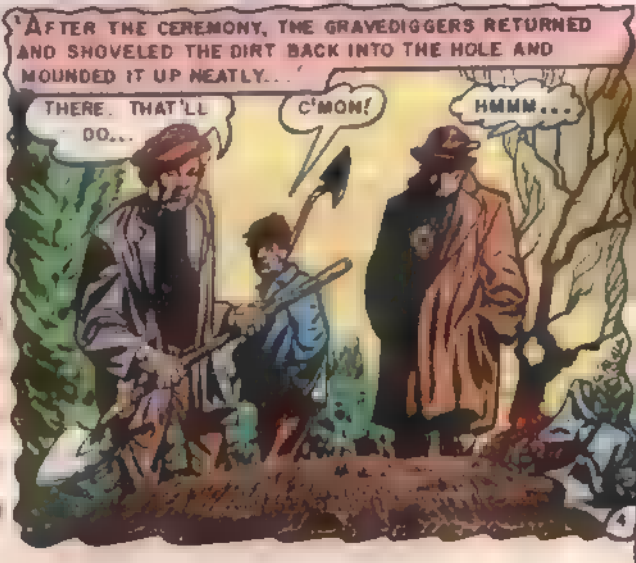

WHY COULDN'T IT? IT'S BEEN ALMOST SEVEN YEARS. THIS IS A BIG CITY. WE GOT A LOT OF BUMS...
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, CHIEF. I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

'SO I DROVE OUT HERE THIS MORNING...'
SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?
I'M SWEENEY, FROM THE GLOBE. COME OUT TO COVER THE FUNERAL TODAY...


OH! I SEE. WELL, THE GRAVEDIGGERS ARE OVER THERE NOW, PREPARING THE GRAVE.
I'LL JUST MOSEY OVER AND WATCH, IF YOU DON'T MIND.

'I WATCHED THEM DIG THE SIX FOOT HOLE...'
OKAY! THAT'S IT!
JUST IN TIME TOO. HERE THEY COME!


'I WATCHED THE WHOLE CEREMONY. A FEW DERELICT FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTED ONE HAD COME ALONG TO PAY THEIR LAST RESPECTS TO THEIR FELLOW...'
LOWER THE COFFIN...
HE WASH A SHWELL FELLER...
SCHNIFF...


'AFTER THE CEREMONY, THE GRAVEDIGGERS RETURNED AND SHOVELED THE DIRT BACK INTO THE HOLE AND MOUNDED IT UP NEATLY...'
THERE. THAT'LL DO...
C'MON!
HMMM...

'After the gravediggers left, I stood a while looking out over the rolling lawns with the simple markers and the new fresh grave-mound jutting out like a sore thumb...'

THAT'S STRANGE! VERY STRANGE...

'I started pacing. I paced along the gate on the west side of the cemetery. Then I paced along the gate on the north side...'

I'M RIGHT. I KNOW I'M RIGHT!

'I went back to the car. I started scratching away on my memo-pad... figuring...'

JUST WHAT I THOUGHT! THERE ISN'T ENOUGH AREA IN THAT CEMETERY FOR A THOUSAND GRAVES!

'There WAS something FISHY about this set-up. I KNEW it. I took a last look at the single mound amid the greenery.'

THEY MUST BE STACKIN' THEM... ONE ABOVE THE OTHER... UNLESS...

'And drove to the nearest shopping section. I stopped at a hardware store...'

I'D LIKE TO BUY A SPADE...

'I drove back to the cemetery and hid my car. I scaled the fence, picked a hiding place, and waited... watching it grow dark...'

I'LL FIND OUT. I'LL FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

'And then, SOMETHING HAPPENED. Something WEIRD and FRIGHTENING. The MOUND... the SINGLE GRAVE-MOUND... SUNK DOWN INTO THE EARTH... SUNK DOWN until it was LEVEL with the SURROUNDING GRASS...'

GOOD LORD...

THE CEMETERY LAY SILENT BENEATH A COLD MOON. THE MUFFLED SOUND OF DIGGING ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT. THE MAN MUMBLED TO HIMSELF AS HE DUG FURIOUSLY...

...SO I'LL *FIND OUT* WHAT THIS IS *ALL ABOUT! I'LL FIND OUT. WHY* SHOULD A *GRAVE MOUND* JUST *SINK DOWN*... JUST *VANISH? WHY...?*

THE SOUND OF METAL STRIKING METAL REVERBERATED IN THE DEEP HOLE THE MAN HAD DUG. HE LOOKED AROUND, CONFUSED...

METAL?! THAT'S FUNNY! THE *COFFIN* WAS *WOOD!* AND...*HEY!* I'M A *GOOD SIX FEET DOWN.* I SHOULD HAVE *HIT* THE COFFIN *LONG AGO! THIS ISN'T THE COFFIN...*

THE MAN CLEARED THE SOIL AWAY FROM THE METAL FLOOR OF THE GRAVE...

THE COFFIN IS GONE! THIS...THIS IS A *DOOR*... A DOOR THAT OPENS *DOWNWARD!*

THE MAN STOOD UP IN THE GRAVE. HE STARED AT THE OLD HOUSE NEARBY, BEYOND THE CEMETERY GATES. THERE WERE LIGHTS ON INSIDE IT, SHINING THROUGH SHADED WINDOWS...

NOW I GET IT! NOW I GET IT! 'THE GRATEFUL HOBOES'...

SUDDENLY THE METAL FLOOR BENEATH THE MAN'S FEET COLLAPSED AND HE PLUMMETED DOWNWARD..

GOOD *EVENING,* MR. SWEENEY I *THOUGHT* I HEARD YOU *KNOCKING.*

COPEHARD!

IT IS *TOO BAD* THAT YOU DISCOVERED OUR LITTLE *SECRET,* MR. SWEENEY.

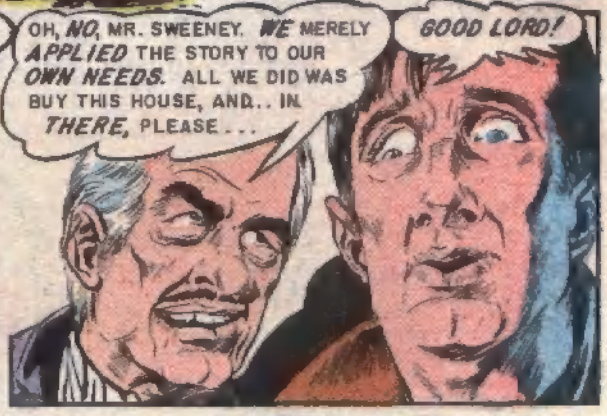
THIS IS HOW YOU CAN BURY A *THOUSAND BODIES* ■ A CEMETERY THAT *COULDN'T HOLD SIX HUNDRED...*

EXACTLY, MR. SWEENEY. AND NOW, IF YOU WILL LEAD THE WAY... MINDING THIS GUN I HAVE HERE... I WILL SHOW YOU OUR INTRICATE UNDER-GROUND NETWORK...
BUT WHY? WHY ALL THIS?

AS A MATTER OF FACT, MR. SWEENEY, WE GOT THE IDEA FROM A COMIC MAGAZINE! ER... NOTICE THAT THERE IS A STEEL TRAP DOOR BENEATH EACH GRAVE LOCATION. ALL THIS ELIMINATES DIGGING, YOU SEE!
THAT'S WHY THE MOUND SUNK DOWN! ER... YOU SAY YOU GOT THE IDEA FROM A COMIC MAGAZINE?

YES. A HORROR MAGAZINE... 'TALES FROM THE CRYPT,' I BELIEVE. IN IT WAS A STORY CALLED 'MIDNIGHT MESS'! UP THOSE STAIRS, PLEASE...
'MIDNIGHT MESS'? WHAT WAS IT ABOUT?

IT WAS ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION OF VAMPIRES WHO ESTABLISHED A RESTAURANT WHERE THEY COULD GET THE BLOOD THEY NEEDED! THROUGH THAT DOOR PLEASE...
THE GRATEFUL HOBES!? VAMPIRES?!


OH, NO, MR. SWEENEY. WE MERELY APPLIED THE STORY TO OUR OWN NEEDS. ALL WE DID WAS BUY THIS HOUSE, AND.. IN THERE, PLEASE...
GOOD LORD!

THERE WERE TWENTY OR THIRTY OF THEM... SITTING ABOUT THE HUGE BANQUET TABLE... PATTING THEIR MOUTHS WITH THEIR NAPKINS...
MEET THE 'GRATEFUL HOBOES, OUTCASTS AND UNWANTEDS' LAYAWAY SOCIETY,' MR. SWEENEY. WE ARE WHAT OUR INITIALS STAND FOR...
CHOKE...
GHOULS

'RAH, REE, REEN! SIS, BOOM, BEAN! STICK 'IM IN THE ASH CAN! HIS BONES ARE PICKED CLEAN!' HEE, HEE! THAT'S THE ORGANIZATION'S CHEER, CREEPS! NO CHOKING! AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO PUT OUT THE FIRE UNDER MY CRUDDY CAULDRON AND CLOSE THE DOOR TO MY REEKING RESTAURANT FOR TASTY TERROR TID-BITS. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR. TILL THEN, GET YOUR DIME'S WORTH! READ THIS WHOLE RAG OVER AGAIN! I DARE YOU!

FREE.. 10 HITLER STAMPS

10 Scarce Stamps—All Different—Sent Free

TO SECURE NAMES FOR OUR MAILING LIST

MAIL coupon at once. We'll send you this fascinating set of 10 Hitler stamps. Different sizes, colors, values. NO COST TO YOU.

These valuable stamps were issued by the short-lived nation of Bohemia-Moravia. They are much sought after. Now they are becoming SCARCE. And since the nation is no longer in existence—no new issues can be minted. Our supply is limited. So, don't ask for more than one set.

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In addition to the FREE Hitler Stamps, we'll also include other interesting offers for your inspection—PLUS a FREE copy of our helpful, informative book, "How To Collect Postage Stamps." It contains fascinating and true stories such as the one about the 1¢ stamp (which a schoolboy gladly sold for $1.50) and which was later bought for FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

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Be the first in your neighborhood to have this valuable set of Hitler Stamps. Your friends will envy you for it and want to buy the set from you. It will become one of the most prized sets of any stamp collection. But you must hurry if you want to get the 10 Hitler Stamps FREE. This special offer may have to be withdrawn soon. If coupon has already been used, write direct to: **Littleton Stamp Co., Dept. 7-EC, Littleton, New Hampshire. (Enclose 10¢ to help cover postage and handling).**

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Send—AT NO COST TO ME—the valuable set of 10 Hitler stamps and the informative booklet, "How To Collect Postage Stamps." I enclose 10¢ to help cover postage and handling.

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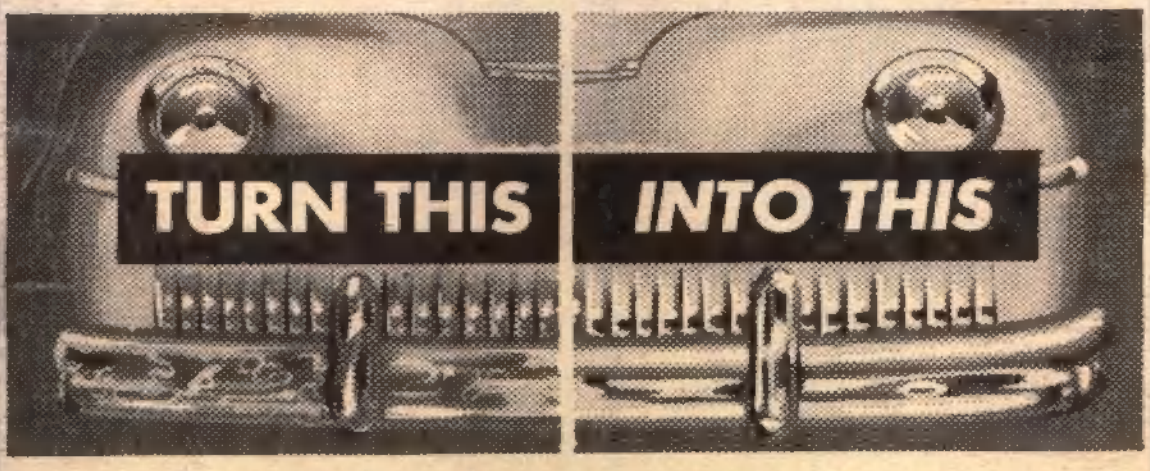
City ..... State .....

AT LAST! A CHROME RESTORER THAT WORKS!



Amazing new 2-way chrome protector wipes away rust —pits—corrosion—in just 2 minutes! Stops rust from forming! Keeps chrome mirror-bright!

Now keep your bumpers, grillwork, window-frames, all chrome on your car sparkling bright as the day you bought it! Keep it rust-free for life! No matter how badly pitted or scarred, this sensational new 2-Way Chrome Protector wipes it Mirror-Bright, prevents new rust and corrosion from forming!

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ONE APPLICATION LASTS ENTIRE SEASON—gives you safe, fool-proof protection against vicious biting erosions of **SALT AIR—SUN—RAIN—SLEET—etc. 101 USES**—for fishing reels, boat trims, bicycles, sporting equipment, etc. Household appliances, farm equipment, toys, any chromed object, etc.

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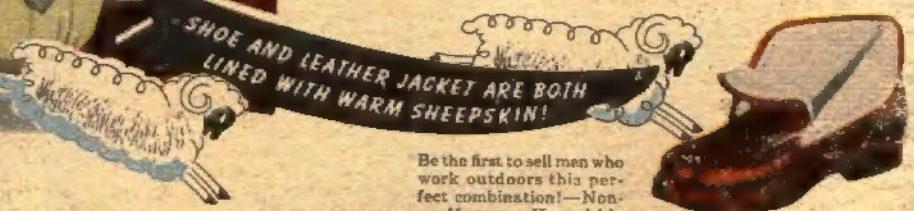
Rush Coupon for FREE Selling Outfit!

NOW IT'S EASY to make BIG MONEY in a profit-making, spare-time business! As our man in your community, you feature Mason's fast-selling Horsehide, Capeskin, Suede and other fine leather jackets—nationally known for smart styling, rugged wear, wonderful warmth. Start by selling to friends and fellow workers. Think of all the outdoor workers around your own home who will be delighted to buy these fine jackets direct from you: truck drivers, milkmen, cab drivers, postmen, gas station, construction, and railroad men—hundreds right in your own community! You'll be amazed how quickly business grows. And no wonder!—You offer these splendid jackets at low money-saving prices people can afford! Our top-notch men find it's easy to make up to $10.00 a day EXTRA income!



Be the first to sell men who work outdoors this perfect combination!—Non-scuff, warm Horsehide leather jacket lined with wooly Sheepskin, and new Horsehide work shoe also warmly lined with fleecy Sheepskin and made with oil-resisting soles and leather storm welt!

These Special Features Help You Make Money From First Hour!

• • • Men really go for these warm Mason jackets of long-lasting Pony Horsehide leather, fine Capeskin leather, soft luxurious Suede leather. You can even take orders for Nylon, Gabardine, 100% Wool, Satin-faced Twill jackets, men's raincoats, too! And just look at these EXTRA features that make Mason jackets so easy to sell:

- Warm, cozy linings of real Sheepskin...nature's own protection against cold!
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Take orders for Nationally-advertised, Velvet-ease Air-Cushion Shoes in 150 dress, sport, work styles for men and women. Air-Cushion Inner-sole gives wonderful feeling of "walking on air" all day long. As the Mason man in your town, you actually feature more shoes in a greater range of sizes and widths than the largest store in town! And at low, direct-from-factory prices! It's easy to fit customers in the style they want—they keep re-ordering, too—put dollars and dollars into your pocket! Join the exceptional men who make up to $200 extra a month and get their family's shoes and garments at wholesale prices!

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Mr. Ned Mason, Dept. MA-175
MASON SHOE MFG. COMPANY,
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

You bet I want to start my own extra-income business! Please rush FREE and postpaid my Powerful Selling Outfit—featuring fast-selling Mason Jackets, Air-Cushion Shoes, other fast-selling specialties—so I can start making BIG MONEY right away!

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